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FATHER CONNELL.

VOL. II.

Just Ready,

In Three Volumes Post 8vo.

THE M.D.'S DAUGHTER.

A NOVEL OF THE XIXTH. CENTURY.

Catherine Napsaw

FATHER CONNELL,

BY

THE O'HARA FAMILY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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FATHER CONNELL.

CHAPTER I.

But, notwithstanding all his peculiarities, the master of the English Academy, was really a good and efficient master; and perhaps throughout all Ireland, at the time, there was not a better school of the kind, than his.

In it were taught, and well taught, along with reading, writing and arithmetic, history geography, English grammar, English composition, and the first principles of a certain kind of metaphisics, borrowed, perhaps, by James Charles, from his private reading of Locke and Harris, and arbitrarily interpreted

by him, in lectures to the boys of the head and second classes. And in all these branches of solid education, Ned Fennell, although an idle boy, soon made such progress as to become rather a favorite with his preceptor.

But it was in an additional branch—the ornamental one, namely, of declamation—Ned so excelled, in the estimation of James Charles Buchmahon, all his young rivals, that the pedagogue might be said to have grown, merely on that account, fond of the boy. For James Charles thought declamation a very fine thing himself, and imperturbably believed that he shone in it. And little Ned's close imitation of his master's conventual manner of "making points," in different dramatic scenes and passages, quite flattered the heart of James Charles Buchmahon.

Ned could repeat for instance, "my name is Norval," to the iota of what his teacher regarded as the excellence of theatrical recitation—and when he came to the words, "round as my shield," not James Charles himself could more

gallantly extend his left arm, and more expressively make the forefinger of his right hand revolve again, and again, and again, around an invisible shield, supposed to be buckled on the protruded limb. Again, in Richard's soliloquy on Bosworth field, when the tyrant says, "I'll try to sleep her into morn," Ned would pop, quite as naturally as his instructor ever did, on one knee, leaning his elbow on a form, and covering his face with his hand; and afterwards, when he started up, roaring out, "give me another horse—bind up my wounds," the shiver of both his hands—not a tiny shake, that might not perhaps be distinctly understood—but a good, palpable, palsy motion, that at a glance you knew betokened mortal terror—was, after himself, perfection in James Charles' eyes. And when Neddy Fennell became transformed into Hotspur, and was describing the fop, he would so closely copy his master's "stage business," in the situation, that once or twice James Charles nearly ap-

plauded him in an indecorous manner. For after covering the palm of his left hand with its proper fingers, to imitate the "pouncet box," he would tap the middle and third finger by way of its lid, and then deliberately raising up these two, he would delve the finger and thumb of his right hand into the open space, and supply them with such a monstrous pinch of pouncet powder, and then dispose of it in the cavities of his nose with such a solemn and intense relish, that surely no other individual, one excepted, ever gave so faithful a picture of nature's self. As to his personification of Will Boniface, in which he had to thrust out his little person, in order to make a paunch, and keep one arm akimbo, and straddle and waddle in his walk, and speak down in his throat, and puff out his cheeks, and drink "his ale" from the fist of his disengaged hand, smacking his lips after each draught. In this character, James Charles almost admitted "a rival near the throne."

But the pleasure and admiration imparted by

Ned Fennell's powers of declamation, were not exclusively enjoyed by James Charles Buchmahon. When Neddy went through his different parts at home, that is under Father Connell's roof, the old man would look on, at the serious sketches with great wonder: and during his protegé's enacting of such characters as Will Boniface, would move his head and his arms together, up and down, and gently smite his knees with the palms of his hands, and laugh until he cried.

And when he took Neddy by the hand, and led him to dinner at Gaby Mac Neary's, as was often the case—for as little Helen has hinted, the old priest, and the old priest-hater had become the greatest friends in the world—Ned, in the hours of recreation during the evening, had at least two additional admirers in old Gaby's house. Indeed, glancing back again homewards for a moment, Mick Dempsey and Mrs. Molloy, occasionally formed another portion of his applauding audience: the latter

exclaiming, very nearly in the words of Mrs. Quickly, at the Boar's Head, "he does it as like one of those harloty players, as ever I see;" (Mrs. Molloy had never seen one,) and Tom Naddy would also be allowed to look on, although he was never known to show the slightest interest in the exhibition, no more than in any other exhibition, or circumstance under the sun.

And along with all these things, it will be gratifying to have it known, that Father Connell continued to love, as much as he admired, his adopted son. He studied Neddy attentively and anxiously, but found nothing positively evil in him. He was a truth-loving boy, not a jot of meanness was in his nature, he was a grateful and an affectionate boy, and he regularly, and of his own accord, attended to all his religious duties; so that the old priest, could not help loving him.

And yet, while he loved, he also feared for Neddy. The young lad's actions, though sel-

dom blameful, too often sprang from impulse, when they should have resulted from principle. He dearly liked frolic and fun, and in his eagerness for either, would, now and then, forget a duty. In choosing objects on which to exercise his practical jokes, he did not always distinguish between the fit and the unfit, between those persons, who might afford to bear a boy's jest, and those whom the boy's sense of veneration ought to have spared, from such an impertinence. And all this too, Father Connell thought he saw. He did not see, however, how much of the contradiction of Neddy's character, at this time of his life, was caused by the stealthy and unsuspected influence, and the inscrutable humour of another person—namely, Tom Naddy, "the priest's boy." For instance.

"I want you to write a bit iv' a letther for me, sir," said Tom to him one evening.

"Surely you can write it yourself, Tom."

"I could'nt write it out handsome enough,

masther Neddy; 'tis so long sense I done a thing ov' the kind, my hand is out, somehow."

"Well then, Tom, I'll do it for you."

And without a single enquiry about the nature of the epistle to be written, he hurried off Tom to the little osier arbour at the top of the priest's garden, and at that person's dictation he wrote as follows:—

"Honorable sir,

"I am a poor, distressed creature, with a wife and seven small children, and I can't get a stroke of work to do, and I come to crave your charity. While there is plenty of beef and mutton, and the best of bacon in your kitchen, to give you more than enough every day in the year, and while you have the good meat to throw away, I haven't a potato to give to my destitute family; and while you have your cellar full of choice wine, to drink into yourself, morning, noon, and night, I haven't one sup of sour milk to wet the lips of myself, my wife, or my children: so

God reward you, sir, and out of your plentiful store give a small charity to a poor, forlorn soul."

"That'll do iligant," remarked Tom.

"And what are you going to do with it?" asked Ned.

"I'll tell you another time, sir; an' I'll engage for the present that the poor, forlorn sowl, will get a big charity on the head of it."

And master Tom Naddy pocketted, and walked slowly off, with the document, after he had obtained Ned Fennell's solemn promise—a promise very unthinkingly given, for in fact Ned's head was full of something else—not to tell any living being, that he, Tom Naddy had had anything to do with the fabrication of the said document.

Early the next day, as Father Connell sat in his little parlour, a very miserable, poor man, introduced by Mrs. Molloy, presented him with a letter.

The priest read it hastily over, fixing his eyes, once or twice on the face of its bearer. He then bestowed on it a more leisurely perusal; and now the glances which he shot towards the surprised and fear stricken poor claimant, were, for Father Connell, unusually vivacious. He next reflected for a moment; and finally started up, seized the now recoiling suitor by the arm, and hurried him into the kitchen.

"Now, sir," he said, pointing to the almost bare walls, "where is the beef, and the mutton, and the bacon for me to feast upon, while you and your family are fasting at home?—show them to me!—where are they, I say?"

"Your reverence, I—"

"Shame upon you, shame upon you, man, to belie me in such a manner."

"Sir—sir."

"Shame upon you! if the Lord made you poor, he gave you no licence to belie your priest; come along with me still!"

The astounded pauper found himself again forced forward, out of the kitchen. Father Connell placed him before the half-barrel of ale, which, without any kind of enclosure, to screen it from observation, stood, " under the stairs;" and causing him, forcing him indeed, to bend his neck and shoulders, he put him too, half way under the stairs, while he continued:—

" And there is my cellar for you—the only cellar I have; take out of it, if you please, a bottle of the choice wine, that I drink, morning, noon, and night; come, find it I say—find it! find me a bottle of the choice wine!"

" I don't see any kind ov wine at all here, sir, I protest."

" Well then; come out of that, and stand before me."

The terrified man obeyed, crawling backward, like a crab.

" Your nature must be very uncharitable, good man, and very bold and daring too—to

come into my own house, and to my very face, charge me with the sin of gluttony, and with the sin of intemperance; and you must also be a very great fool, to imagine that you could expect a benefaction from the man you calumniated. I am ashamed of you, my good man—I am indeed,, and I wonder at you; on my word I do."

In addition to his former consternation, no one could possibly look more astonished, than now did the person thus addressed. It was evident to him, that he was accused of some crime, but of what kind, he could not for his soul conjecture. Why he had been half dragged into the kitchen, and under the stairs, to look for beef, mutton, bacon, and choice wine, where none was to be found, seemed another mystery, inexplicable to the poor, stupified fellow; and the upshot of it was, that tears came into his eyes, and coursed through the wrinkles of his cheeks. He moved in silence to quit the presence of his offended priest.

But Father Connell had not bargained for this at all. In an instant his pious displeasure left him: pity, if not remorse, touched his heart, and he brushed a tear from his own old eyes as he called out—"stop, my good man." The wretched being, somewhat re-assured by the present kindness of the clergyman's tone, did so.

"I see you are sorry for your fault, and I forgive you; you are penitent—that's enough; what reconciles us to our God surely ought to make us friends with one another. But let me warn you against calumniating your neighbour in future: it is a grievous, grievous sin. Go home now to your family;" he took the man's hand, and while shaking it and squeezing it, deposited in his palm the few pieces of silver, he could find in his pockets;—"go: I forgive you from my heart, distress makes us bitter and censorious; go, and may God bless you."

The poor man, now weeping plentifully,

dropped on his knee, to receive the blessing, and then hurried out of the house.

Throughout these occurrences, Tom Naddy had been peeping, now from one corner, now from another; and laughing—not audibly, but silently in all the cavities next to his heart.

Father Connell again sat down in his little parlour, and again took up and read the strange petition he had just received. In a few minutes he laid it down before him with a sudden and very painful suspicion in his mind. It struck him now, for the first time, that he knew the handwriting. He examined it more closely, and conviction followed, and with it came a pang, perhaps the bitterest which, during his life, he had ever known, and he laid his forehead on his hands while it swayed him.

After some time he arose, his almost white eyebrows knitted and depressed, and Tom Naddy heard him walking very rapidly about the parlour. In a few minutes he folded up the paper, put it in his pocket, and left the house.

Proceeding to the residence, in a remote suburb street, of the person who had brought him the letter, Father Connell questioned the poor man about it. "Who wrote it for him?" He had never asked any one to write it. It had been brought to him by a young lad, of that lad's own accord, who assured him that if he presented it to Father Connell much good would thereby result to him and his family. "Had he since then read the letter, or got any one to do so for him?" No, the petitioner could not read writing himself, and didn't wish to be troublesome to any one else on the subject. "Did he know the lad's name?" Yes, but he had pledged his solemn word not to reveal it to a human being; he would disclose it to Father Connell, however, if the clergyman wished. But Father Connell instantly demurred: no man, he said, could pretend to release another from the engagement of a solemn promise; and he returned to his house.

About this time of the day Ned Fennell was

also moving homeward from the English Academy, capering and swinging his satchel round his head, and "as hungry as a hound." according to himself, for his dinner. Tom Naddy met him some distance from their abode.

"You won't forget that I have your word pledged to me, Masther Ned," said Tom.

"Ill keep my word like a man, when it is pledged; but what have I pledged it about now? I quite forget."

"You pledged me your solemn word, that you'd never let it be known to any one in the wide world that it was I put you on to writing the letther last night."

"Oh, aye, I have it now; it quite went out of my mind: so never fear; my word to you shall be kept."

They parted. Ned was soon knocking at Father Connell's door. Mrs. Molloy opened it to him. He took hold of both her hands and shook them violently.

"Will you never larn to be asy an' quiet, masther Neddy," she asked in words of reproof, while her very beard smiled in approval of the lad's greeting, which she cordially returned.

"I'll be as quiet as a lamb while I am eating my dinner, Mrs. Molloy: so walk in here and get it for me."

He tied his satchel to her apron string, passed an arm through one of hers, and strutted at her side towards the house, looking up and grimacing into her face—all to the great delight of the good old lady, although she threatened to box his ears, "if he wouldn't be quiet, and lave her alone." The boy entered the little parlour with his usual salutation of respect, and his smile of real affection; but the cheery reply of "welcome home, Neddy, my child," was not on this occasion accorded to him. The old man only nodded, gravely, and motioned to him to become seated to the little table, on which his dinner was usually laid.

Poor Ned felt chilled, and, though he could

not suspect why, terrified. His frugal meal was quickly placed before him by Mrs. Molloy, who gabbled something or other, to which neither the priest, nor his protegé answered a word. It was over, and still perfect silence continued; and, notwithstanding the boy's late boast of ravenousness, he had scarce eaten a mouthful. He now glanced towards Father Connell and perceived that he sat with crossed kness, and folded arms, a very picture of old age, sorrowing.

"Come hither, Neddy Fennell," said the clergyman at last. The boy stood to his knee.

"Neddy, I knew you were fond of a frolic, and thoughtless and giddy, in pursuing it; but I passed this over, because, I always was sure that your jokes came into your head, without a plan, and without an intention of doing harm to any one; and I said to myself, that riper years would make you more steady. But I was wrong in part of my judgment, Neddy Fennell. I now find out, and it gives me

great trouble at my heart to know the fact, that you use fore-cast, and take your leisure to lay a plan, for the purpose of having your joke; yes, Neddy, and you can think, and call it sport to make laughter for yourself, out of the sorrows and sufferings of the poor, and to mock, and turn into a scoff, your best friend in this world, Neddy; and a very old man too, Neddy; a very old man, and your priest."

Neddy was vehemently beginning to utter something.

"Hush child—do not add to your offences, by saying what is not the truth. I have often told you, that one lie, puts us into the power of the father of lies."

"I have never told you a lie, sir; I never will tell you a lie, sir; but—"

"Do not interrupt me, Neddy. Do not merely promise me the truth; but answer me at present in the truth.—Is that your hand-writing?" he held the letter out to him.

Having glanced over it, Neddy did not immediately answer. A vague thought of Tom Naddy's treachery began to break upon his mind. Father Connell sternly repeated his question.

"Yes, sir," he replied, in a very humble tone, "this was written by me."

"I thought so, Neddy; indeed I was sure of it; and yet, your own words make me sadder than ever."

The boy was about to explain, with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes, how he had been induced to write it, and of course by whom; but a recollection of his solemn promise to Tom Naddy checked him, and when the old priest had uttered the last words, Ned Fennell began crying bitterly. He saw that he could not escape from the most disgraceful of charges, and despair very nearly possessed him.

"Listen to me, child. I loved you. I loved you as a father; as your father in the spirit, and for the sake of him who left us the

new commandment—"love one another."—And indeed, Neddy, I think—I fear—that—I loved you too well, in a mere human yearning of the heart also; and that I am therefore, now punished. 'Tis quite true, my child. Abraham never loved Isaac, and Isaac never loved Jacob, more than I loved you; and Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing comfort, because they were not, never I believe, sorrowed over the loss of them more truly, than I now sorrow, over your falling off."

Father Connell's broken voice interrupted him; and Neddy could now only go on crying until his grief became a passionate paroxysm.

"Well, Neddy, I see you are sorry for your crime—and that is something. But my duty towards you plainly tells me that you ought to suffer more. Your crime calls out for chastisement, my child—painful, bodily chastisement. I am commissioned to pluck up by the roots, this instant the vices that are beginning

to sprout in your young heart; lest that heart might become an unfeeling one in your manhood, and make you, when the grave covers me, a bold and careless scoffer of all that is holy in earthly misfortune, and, worse than that, in religion, Neddy."

The young lad flung himself upon his knees, and with clasped hands was beginning an appeal, though he still had resolved not to break his pledge to Tom Naddy.

"It is no use, child; it is no use: stand up and walk on before me into the yard." The priest as yet could only think that he was petitioning against the infliction of the promised chastisement. Arrived in the yard, Father Connell commanded him to enter "the black hole," and not to leave it till he should be brought out for further punishment. Ned obeyed in silence. This "black hole," was a small shed, built to one side of the little yard, and used as a storehouse for coals and other

fuel. Father Connell hasped its door upon him; for it had no lock, and Ned heard his footsteps leaving the premises.

Not many minutes had elapsed, when the hasp was briskly unloosed however, the door flung open, and the burly person of the housekeeper, seen by Neddy supplying its place: that is shutting out the light of day, almost as effectually as ever it had done.

"What mischief did you do now, you misfortunate skybow?" she hoarsely demanded.

There was no answer to the lady's question. She peered in. Her pet was sitting on a lump of coal, his hands covering his face; and she saw his breast heaving with sobs, while tears escaped over the backs of his hands. Mrs. Molloy had never seen him in such a mood before.

"Lord be good to me sowl an' body, what's the matther with you child?"

Still no answer.

"Will you spake to me, will you, you poor

brat ov a boy? Will you, I say; is it crying you are for being put in here? For what rason would that make you cry? A'int I come to let you out."

"I'm not crying for being put in here," at last sobbed Ned, "but I'm crying to think, that Father Connell would have it on his mind, that I could make sport of him, and of a poor starving man, and his family; it's that I am crying for, Peggy."

"An' tell me, my lanna, what happened to make the priest think that wrong ov you?"

"No matter, Peggy; I can't tell you about it; he will tell you himself; I can't; that's all."

"Keep it all to yourself then, you obstinate little mule, what need I care?—Ned, agra, tell me what's the matther; sure I'll do my best to bring you over it; that's a good boy; tell me now."

"No, Peggy—I say again I can't."

"Well, bottle it up and smoke it. Tare-an'-ages! Make ducks an' drakes ov it, my honey.

Neddy, avourneen, what is it about, at all, at all?"

Ned only shook his head.

"You won't, won't you? I don't care an ould rush, whether you do or no, you scatther-brained scape-grace. Neddy, my darlin', won't you tell me?"

"If I could tell any one, I'd tell you, Peggy. But I made a solemn promise, that I wouldn't tell a living creature."

"Sup, an' make merry on your promise then, an' much good may it do you. Come out o' that, any how: here—come out I bid you."

"Peggy, I won't leave this, until the priest comes back; I'll go through every thing he bids me."

"Come out to me this moment!"

"I will not, Peggy."

"No? Och, och, is'nt this a poor case? Do you want to torment the sowl an' body out o' me? Do you want to vex the very liver is in me? you cross-grained, bull-headed, bit ov a

boy; I'll make you come out, or I'll know for what!"

She stooped, and was making a grasp at her favourite, when her well-starched cap encountered the claw of a rusty nail, at the top of the doorway, and by it was whisked off her head, while her disengaged grey locks tumbled about her face. But, she returned to the charge, and was dragging out Neddy per force, when Father Connell's voice sounded deeply and authoritatively at her back:

"Peggy, do not meddle with the boy."

"But, I will meddle with the boy. Do you want to make a peel-garlic of the crature? Do you want to put him in his airly grave? Fie, for shame on your reverence! There is'nt a lovin'er sowl, for yourself, an' myself, undher the livin' sun, this blessed minit."

"Come out at my bidding, Neddy Fennell," said the priest. Neddy obeyed at once.

Standing at Father Connell's back, appeared Mick Dempsey, master of the parish poor-

school, clad as sprucely as ever, and his scarlet watch ribbon streaking down his thigh, and behind him again stood Tom Naddy, his hands crippled into each other, his lips were fixed as if for whistling, although no such sound reached the by-standers. And did Ned's eyes deceive him? Was there no sorrow upon his features for the boy he had placed in sore trouble?

Ned looked at him again, and it was, he assured himself, an expression of gratified cunning solely, which played through the puckers around the whistler's mouth. And, oh, how his blood raged at this discovery—and what would he not have given to let fly his clenched fists, at that moment, into his old friend's face.

But Father Connell commanded him to walk before him into the parlour, Mick Dempsey and Tom Naddy following; and while Mrs. Molloy was still engaged forcing her stiff, stubborn hair, under her reclaimed cap, and muttering to herself all the time, against the

tyranny practised on "her poor lovvi' boy," the priest had locked the parlour door on the inside upon himself and his present party.

"Have you brought the birch with you, Mr. Dempsey?" he now solemnly enquired.

"I have so, sir, 'pon my word," placidly answered Mick, and he produced from under his coat a besom of select birch twigs, almost large enough to sweep the floor of his own school-house—a process by the way, which the said floor very often wanted.

"Neddy Fennell, prepare your person for the severe punishment I have promised you; strip, sir."

As if he would at once get through a very unpalatable duty, Neddy was immediately and rapidly at work, and very soon stood ready for execution.

"Here, Tom Naddy," continued the priest, take master Ned Fennell on your shoulders."

"Father Connell," said Ned, his tears now dried up, and his face calm though stern, "if

you tell Mr. Dempsey to cut away every bit of flesh, that is on me."

"Oh, murther!" shrieked a hoarse voice, outside the door, "every bit ov the flesh that is on him!—let me in here, I say, let me in." No one took notice.

"If he cuts away, till he's tired, sir, I'll not move an inch under his hand; but sir—I will not go on that fellow's back."

"Let me in, I bid ye, or I'll whip the cloak over my head, an' go to the bishop, an' tell on ye! Yis, an' I'll go to the mayor's office, an' tell on ye, let me in—let me in," and Mrs. Molloy kicked violently at the door.

"Neddy," rejoined Father Connell, "you have acknowledged your crime, and why will you not take its punishment obediently?"

"I can't say why, sir,—but twenty men, and twenty horses to drag me, would never put me on *his* back."

"Tom Naddy, you vagabone, if you lend a hand to hoist him, I'll make you sup sorrow

the longest day you live," again shouted the voice outside the door, while the former loud kicking continued.

"Well, Neddy, so far you shall be indulged; Mr. Dempsey, let him receive his reward, just as he stands; proceed Mr. Dempsey."

"Mick Dempsey, you long gad!" Mrs. Molloy now had her eye to the key-hole, and saw Mick put one leg in advance of the other, and slightly wave aloft, in his right hand, his formidable implement of torture.

"Mick Dempsey, I say, touch him if you dare: touch him with only a wet finger, an' salvation to my wicked sowl! but I'll—oh! Tare-an'-ages, look at that!"

While talking, she saw the little besom flourished in the air, while Mick Dempsey gave two or three short coughs—and then, crash it came, on a table near at hand.

"Dress now, Neddy, my child; aye, my good child."

Gazing in wonder, and by no means in dis-

pleasure, into the faces of those around him, Ned, though sorely puzzled at this termination of the affair, was not slow in attending to the priest's last command. Father Connell was smiling blandly ; Mick Dempsey was also smiling, with the expression of some great hidden meaning, and even Tom Naddy was —trying to smile, but could not. The mischievous rascal had no machinery within him, able to produce the effect.

" Come here to me now, my own good child," Father Connell went on, extending his arms. Neddy sprang forward.

" Mick Dempsey," continued the old priest, in a loud tone of rejoicing, " isn't Neddy a good boy, after all ?"

" He is to be sure," answered Mrs. Molloy, outside the door, " and whoever said he wasn't, but your two sefs within there ?—and maybe I'd be let in at last. Who knows but I might ?" she continued, uttering a hoarse, hideous giggle.

"Let her in, Mick," said Father Connell; and accordingly the housekeeper entered upon the scene.

"He is Mick, he is Peggy, a very good boy. He has not, as I thought at first, made sport of a poor man's sorrow, nor mocked his old priest; and he bore all I charged him with, and he stood ready for heavy punishment sooner than break a promise solemnly given. Yes, Neddy, I love you as well as ever I did, now; and I believe better, Neddy;" and he bent his head, and laid his cheek to the boy's cheek.

Ned slid down, kneeling, from his old friend's embrace, and clasped his arms round his knees, weeping for joy. And "I see you know all about the letter sir," he said—"who told you, sir?"

"Tom Naddy met me in the bosheen, and told me every word about it; and, that says a good deal, for Tom Naddy; he wouldn't let a good boy suffer for his fault:" Ned hurried over to Tom, and held out his hand.

"Come here to me again, my child." He now whispered into Ned's ear, "I am so very much rejoiced to find you guiltless, that I do not intend to chastise Tom Naddy, as he deserves."

"Thank you from the heart sir."

"No I will not, I will not punish him; he erred greatly at first, but he behaved well, very well afterwards. Peggy, listen to me," and he proceeded to recount for Peggy's satisfaction—for her approval, Peggy thought, the whole transaction, from beginning to end, during which, she would often slap the palms of her hands together, and interrupt her master, with such expressions as—"did'nt I tell you, *ma-ha-bouchal* he was!—that's the boy, your sowl against a hundhred!" and when the story was finished she caught and jerked Neddy up, into her arms, as if he had been an infant, hugged him, and incommoded his chin with her beard, while she was kissing

him. As for Tom Naddy she could only bring herself to notice him with her usual expression of "kiln-dried brat."

"And now, Peggy," said Father Connell, in conclusion, "don't you think Neddy deserves a little mug of ale, that he may drink really, out of a real mug, and not out of his own little fist, while he is playing Mr. Boniface for you? And don't you think Mick Dempsey deserves another mug of ale, because he gave your pet such a sound flogging? And Tom Naddy, too —wont you give him a draught in the kitchen." Mrs. Molloy began to look sour, but at the next words brightened up again, "and take a good long one yourself with him? and I protest I think I'll have another mug myself, come Peggy, stir yourself."

Peggy soon fulfilled her orders; and as the good ale was quaffed or sipped, Father Connell walked up and down the parlour, gently rubbing his hands, and still smiling; and almost as often as he passed his adopted son, he would

stop a moment, lay his hand on his shoulder, or pass his fingers over his curly pate, and whisper, "God bless you, my child;" and then he would say something pleasant, at which every one laughed; and when Peggy came to the parlour door, he would tell her she was a faithless sentinel over a prisoner; and Peggy would tell him in return, that she didn't hire with him to be a jailor—and forewarn him that every time she put "her lovin' boy," into the black hole, she would let him out, at which every one, Father Connell included, would laugh heartily again; so that verily there was much jubilee and rejoicing, that evening, in the priest's parlour, aye, and in his kitchen too. The good man himself went to bed, with a feeling as if a mountain had just been pushed off his heart.

This is a fit place to mention that notwithstanding Father Connell's utmost care, poor Mrs. Fennell and her aunt had now been many months dead.

CHAPTER II.

A good, long stride, in seven league boots, over some years.

The corporate authorities of Father Connell's city, had, in common-council assembled, decreed and ordered, that, within the bounds of their jurisdiction, it should be summer, or the "summer half year," from the month of March, to the month of September, and that, in consequence, no lamps need be lighted during that time; in fact, that no lamps should be lighted. They had also come to a decision that, upon each and every night when the almanack fore-

told ever so thin a gleam of moonshine, it was to be, to all intents and purposes, a moonlight night, over the whole space they governed, and hence, they again commanded, that even during their "winter half year," when moonlight nights of this description occurred, the streets of their good city, should not be indebted to human art for a single additional ray of illumination. That these orders in council for the regulation of the heavenly bodies were deduced from very nice scientific calculations, is not quite averred; but that they suited, indifferently well, the peculiar economy of the little, crafty corporation, is positively asserted.

It is November. It is a November evening too; the town clock has just struck seven. Furthermore, it is a moonlight night—in the almanack: that is, supposing the moon to be really "made of green cheese," no more than a segment of the edge of her crust can possibly be yet visible to her mistress the earth, and even of that mother earth, or at least as many

of her children as dot the surface of the small locality we have now to do with, are unable to discern a glint, so heavy and substantial is the canopy of blue-black clouds, interfering between the satellite and her primary. But no matter for all that, the corporate sages of the city had decided that a moonlight night it was to be; and so not a single one of their paltry, half-starved little lamps is winking itself asleep, through the thick, the almost material darkness.

And on this pleasant evening there is a low, fat, little old man, leaning on his fat, little elbows and arms over the uncouth half door of his shop, and by his low whistle, and his glances up and down the street, he does not seem at all inconvenienced by the state of the weather, or the want of lamp light. He is the owner of a small tenement, with small windows in it, and yet those windows having sashes so heavy, that it was very difficult to raise them up, that is any of them that could at all be

raised up. But in truth, the greater number of them had not been stirred for many years; and the dust and dirt had not been brushed off them, one might suppose, since the first day of their construction; and almost every little pane of glass in them, had been so often pieced and patched, that it became eventually doubtful, whether any of their original glazery existed. And the little, fat old man's little shop had an inflation, called a bow-window, projecting into the pathway of the street, and so dingy, that the sharpest eye could not penetrate past its surface.

What in the world he did there, peeping over his half door, and whistling confidential music to himself, no rational passer by could, for the life of him, imagine. There was nothing in the clouds in any wise attractive; neither moon, nor stars, nor Aurora Borealis, nor a comet, not even colour, nor motion, nor change, nor variety of any kind, nor even a promise of it all night long. The milliner's

shop opposite to him, was shut up, so that he could see no finery in its windows, no fine people within itself; nay, he couldn't read, through the dense gloom, even the milliner's name, upon her signboard across the street. The cloth shop next to the milliner's at one side was also closed; the grocer's at its other side had very very little custom. To be sure a few people, forced from their firesides by some grievous necessity, on such a chilly, and doleful evening, now and then passed him, plashing through the little water pools, or sliding over, or else sticking in the glutinous puddle of the streets; but if these visions interested him, he could enjoy them but for a few seconds at a time, as they quickly vanished at his either hand, into the wide open "jaws of darkness."

So no one could possibly tell what he was doing, and now for nearly two hours, had been doing in his own mind, as he leaned over his little half door, emitting his almost inaudible

little whistle, and rolling his heavy fat eyes in every direction. Could he tell himself? Indeed he could not.

A soft, lumpish, invisible substance, suddenly smote him on the cheek. He started, shuddered, said some prayers, but did not otherwise change his attitude. A second time, he was hit on the other cheek, in the same way, and a second time he only did what he had done before. A third, and a fourth time, a fifth and a sixth time, nay, a twentieth time, the mysterious assaults were repeated; and yet, though evidently suffering great fear and terror, he would only pray the more volubly without flinching a step from his unlucky position. And could he now tell you what was the matter? He was very sure he could. He was suffering under some deserved chastisement, from the "good people." They were fairy blows he felt, he would solemnly assure you.

"A-rodge, a-rodge, come out o' that a-rodge,"

exclaimed an almost naked, full limbed, gigantic figure, close to him, without head covering, bare footed, and barelegged: the voice that spoke was half discordant, half mirthful, and the speaker, or rather gibberer, bent his large face close to our friend's and grimaced ideotically at him. He held one of the skirts of the indescribable clothing round his loins tucked over his left arm, and in the skirt was some oatmeal, and he would constantly dart his right hand, among the provender, snatch up some of it, and dash it towards his mouth; but he as often hit with it different parts of his countenance as he succeeded in lodging any of it within the receptacle for which it was intended; and this constant powdering of his features gave a very ghastly expression to them.

"A-rodge, a-rodge, come out o' that a-rodge."

"Is that you, Mickle?" placidly questioned the little, fat man, as he immediately obeyed the command, to "come out o' that," by at last altering his attitude, and opening his half door.

The monster bent himself half double, and gallopped into the little dingy shop, a fourth part lighted by the very smallest taper, and through it into the interior of the house.

"You've got nothin' ye beggin' "*budgy*," was the next salutation which the little shopkeeper received from a thin, sharp featured man, whose eye was like that of a vicious, half-intelligent pig, and so small that his very large nose, high cheek bones and beetling eye brows, nearly hid it. He was inveterately yellow. He wore a suit of rusty black, begrimed and tattered; his black locks hung in matted cords about his cheeks and shoulders; and he carried under his arm something rolled up in a shoemaker's leathern apron.

"Here, George, here," was the only answer of the person addressed, as he again undid his hatchway.

George entered, but did not race off as Mickle had done; he paused in the shop.

"You've got nothin' I say, nor none of your

cursed breed?" he again questioned, as he blinked his eyes, with spiteful eagerness, at the little, old, fat man.

"No, George, no."

"There's no demand, you beggin' *bochach*?

"No demand, George, none."

"There's no demand on the man with the pepper-and-salt coat?"

"No demand, in life, George," and George's friend was closing his half door, when the caustic ideot ran hastily to him, seized him by both his arms, and while his sharp features took nearly a crying expression, shook him violently.

"By Herns I'd run you through, you beggin' thief! We're free, we're free—free of the city—there is no one dare confine us, or shut doors on us—I'd run you through; or any o' your cursed breed. We're free I say?" he held his fore finger close to the shopkeeper's eye, as if about to dart it full into the orb.

"Oh; yes, you're free, George; there's no doubt of it."

"No doors to be shut on us?"

"No, no, George."

"Ho! ho! ho! yellow George! yellow George!" was screamed over the half door, by a low sized, disjointed looking fellow, with a round face deeply pitted from the small pox, one of his eyes, a sightless mass, projecting from its lids; and the other, as well as the rest of his features, expressive, notwithstanding his frequent laughter, of much ideotic ferocity. He was clothed in a cast off suit, much too large for him: his shoes were particularly so. He bent his face constantly towards the ground. His arms were very long, and he moved by occasionally hopping on his right leg, and then jerking forward the other side of his person.

"Go 'long, ye blackamoors, breed that lived on horses' flesh," cried George, running towards him, in return for his salutation.

"Yellow George, the fool!" shouted Paddy Moran, avoiding the rencontre and slinging himself forward in the same direction which Mickle had taken.

"I say, Budgy Donally, we're free, and there's no demand," reiterated yellow George.

"Oh! no, George, no."

"Well, we'll recompense you for that. I'll put you in my uncle's, the alderman's house; an' I'll throw you fish an' a bag of bran," was George's promise—one often made, by the way, as he followed his two predecessors.

Budgy Donally, as George had called him, resumed his place at the half door, and he had scarcely fixed himself in his old position when a repetition of the fairy blows (they certainly were inflicted by some unseen agency) occurred; and again he started, half shouted in terror, and rapidly muttered his prayers, but still he would not wince under the infliction, nor even turn away his head from it.

"A poor boy that's burned wid the frost," whiningly appealed a fresh visitant, a man clothed in shreds and patches, and different portions of his attire kept on him by the aid of small hay ropes. As he announced himself he leaned lazily on a long, thick wattle.

As on the former occasion, the little half-door quickly opened to him; and as he, too, very leisurely plodded his way into the inside of the house—he continued his egotistical account of himself.

"My fut is complainin' agin the road, an' my bones is grumblin' agin the weather; an' I can't stop any where at all—an' I'm always goin' about over an hether—an' I don't see any business I have goin' about any where—no, no more business nor a starved bee in a fallow field." And at these words his voice died away, in the distance.

"They're purshuin' me over an' hether, an' here an' there, an' through the bogs, an'

across the hills, an' over the river, an' into the thick woods—they're purshuin' me ever an' ever."

These words were volubly uttered by a new comer. He was a middle sized, and more than middle aged person, wearing a battered and broken straw hat, of which the very wide brim flapped far down his face; a flaming old plush scarlet coloured waistcoat, hanging half off his person, in ribbons; a smallclothes to match; a tattered soldier's coat, of the bygone taste, when long, full skirts, and abundance of tape flourishing over cuffs, lapels, and collar, were excellent military fashion. Stockings he had none; and when he moved, his brogues slipped up and down.

Once more the hatchway unclosed, and this gentleman entered, and also passed away through the shop, walking very hastily, bending his head and eyes downwards, and still declaring, how much and how deviously he was "purshoo'd."

And there was yet another visitor ; one clad coarsely, but not in tatters or patches; for his dress—although very old, appeared to have been kept together with the greatest diligence of needle and thread, and seemed the relic of former respectability ; his pale, spare face, was solemn and serious, as if his mind were always absorded in deep calculation; and he entered with his arms closely folded across his breast.

He did not greet our hospitable friend, as ingress was afforded to him; but, was silently pacing after the other visitors, when the little proprietor of the house addressed him.

" Three barrels, seventeen stones, at two pence farthing half farthing a stone?" the man stopped suddenly, looked straight before him only for a few seconds, compressing his lips into a mere line, and then answered, " fifteen and two pence halfpenny," and onward he pursued his way.

The last arrival on this particular evening was a creature of very low stature, having a soldier's stock under his neck, a boy's jacket on his body, and such a mass of rags tied with twine round his nether limbs, that he was obliged to labour hard whenever he chose to put them in motion.

This curiosity made many hideous grimaces and gesticulations to the door-keeper, who, for the last time opening the hatchway, and pointing inwards allowed the deaf and dumb fool to pass out of his shop.

He was scarcely gone, when a tall, well limbed, and very handsome youth, vaulted over the half door and stood, half laughing, before our benevolent friend.

"Ah, Ned, I'm glad you're come back; go behind the counter now, and look over the day's accounts." The lad cheerfully obeyed, his master following him.

"What red spots are those on your cheeks,

sir?" questioned Ned, before they engaged in their task.

"Oh! Ned, what would they be but fairy blows? for two long hours and more that I was looking over the door, the "good people" never stopped sthriking me—just like as if big bullets were hitting me all over the face and shoulders—look, Ned,—here's the way they went on at me—"

He shut his little plump fist, protruded the knuckle of its middle finger, and as a practical illustration of how the fairy blows had been inflicted, began to punch away at his apprentice as fast as he could with that particular knuckle.

"Hugh, hugh, hugh,—here's the way they went at me—" accompanying every punch with a "hugh;" and he did punch so quickly and so resolutely into Ned's face and forehead, that the latter was obliged laughingly to cry out for quarter.

"Oh, sir, that's enough: I now comprehend right well how they went on at you;" and he endeavoured to avoid what natural philosophers would call a demonstration by experiment. But his master, suddenly seizing him by the collar with his disengaged hand, continued to punch on, until he lost his breath from the real fatigue of his occupation.

And a light here begins to break in upon us. Notwithstanding the arbitrary title conferred on him by yellow George, the little personage before us was indeed no other than Nick Mc Grath—poor Atty Fennell's "buffalo-man," who exhibited some of the manners of that animal at the *Charitable Society*, upon the evening when, most fatally for himself, Atty presided over the assembly.

"Yes, that's the way they went on at me, Ned," he resumed at last, getting quiet, from mere lack of breath and strength.

"And on my word, they must have smarted you pretty well, sir."

"Oh! I'm black and blue from them, Ned."

"And no wonder, sir, if they worked so hard," and he rubbed his own face over and over with his extended hand, "but why didn't you go away from the door and so escape?"

"No, no, Ned, no: 'tis always the best to let the "good people" have their own way; if you thry to stop 'em they'll wither you up some time or other, 'tis the right plan not to stir hand or foot agin them; and whenever they come across you, Ned, take care not to vex 'em by doing any thing else."

"I'll be as civil as smooth water to them, sir."

"Do, Ned, do, or the Heavens only knows what might happen;" and with this business-like advice, Nick Mc Grath retired to his little "parlour, kitchen and all," to warm himself, take his glass of punch, sweetened with mo-

lasses from his own little oil and colour shop; and when that had been imbibed, to say his prayers preparatory to going to bed, with his back to the fire.

CHAPTER III.

Ned, left in the shop, to regulate the day's accounts, see that his cash was all right, and everything in order, could not help soliloquizing—

"And on my word, master Neddy, you richly deserve after all the knuckling you have just got;—'twas something like what is called, in fine English, retributive justice; what a simple, poor man!—We well knew he would lay all the blame to the fairies, and never suppose that his own hopeful apprentice, and one

or two scapegraces like him, were his tormentors ; kind-hearted little creature ! 'tis a pity to play tricks on you—and yet you tempt a body to it."

In fact, the fairy blows had been given by soft, clay balls, impelled through an old gun-barrel, a sport at which Ned and his friends alluded to, took great delight, and in which they had, from constant practice, become excellent marksmen; an assertion that recent evidence will doubtless render very credible.

He was busily engaged, finishing his day's tot, his face bent intently towards his account-book, when a low gentle voice, murmured very near to him: " Masther Neddy Fennell."

He suddenly looked up. A tall female, enveloped in the usual dark blue cloak, stood immediately opposite to him, on the other side of the counter. One hand and arm of this figure, quite bare, were visible outside the cloak, in order that its wearer might hold its hood closely gathered over her face; and

no arm could be rounder, and more beautifully proportioned than was that one; while the hand, though red, was small, plump, and with tapering fingers. They both hinted, moreover, that their owner must be a very young girl.

"Well, my dear?" questioned Ned.

"I have some words to spake to you, young man," answered a sad, musical voice, still in a very low tone, and indeed only half heard within the folds of the impervious hood.

"Out with them, my pet; and let a body see your face, won't you?"

"He moved his hand towards the hood.

The person stept back, out of his reach.

"That's not the way to make me tell you anything, sir," she said.

"Why so? You say you want to speak with me, and yet won't let me see your face? Come, come, my dear, I can carry on no such mysterious conversation in an honest man's house; that face I must see, or—," he was

about to vault across the counter, when an earnestly whispered caution stopped him.

"Hould yer hand, young man! I will let you see my face an' welcome; but not here, nor at the present time. It might be a sore thing for both of us, if I let go the hood of my cloak in this place. I have words to spake with you, I say over again, aye, and there's as much as life an' death in them words; but I won't spake them to you now, no more than I will let you see my face now."

"Life and death, good girl! Pooh! you must be a fool, whatever kind of a face you have on you. What do you mean?" He was again putting himself in motion; she went on rapidly in sharp whispers.

"For the Lord's sake, don't come next or nigh me!" Her head hastily turned in the direction of the half door. "Och, och! there is eyes upon me! I see one abroad, dark as it is, watchin' me close! don't stir I bid you—nor spake a word to me—nor seem to take

notice o' me at all—but listen, listen! I'm in possession of a knowledge, that consarns your life—an' I am here, at the risk of my own life, to thry an' save yours—so meet me this very night, an' as soon as you can for both our sakes. You know Joan Flahesty's house in the *grush** o' houses on Gallow's Green—meet me there, an' be sure you take a roundabout an' a crooked road to it, that no livin' sowl may guess you'll be on the road to it. Meet me in Joan Flaherty's house I say, an' its there I'll tell you my words—an' its there I'll take the hood from my face too, for I don't want to hide the face from you; och, no! nor the heart neither—now God be wid you—an' for this wide world's wealth don't fail me!"

Before Ned Fennell could reply, she had bounded like a fawn, into the street. He now really vaulted across the counter, and, with as much agility as herself, followed her. But

* Scattered handful of any thing.

the almanack moonlight out of doors, completely baffled his attempts to catch a glimpse of her in any direction ; and a moment's thought curbed his fleet foot, in its instinctive start—like the pawing of a spirited horse, eager for his journey—to race after the unknown visitor. A wholesome recollection of duties to be yet gone through at home, also helped to keep him for the present quiet.

So, he returned into the dingy little shop, quite finished his accounts, and then fell to barring, bolting, and locking, for the night.

"You're done there, Ned, my good boy, ain't you ?" questioned his master's kind, little, cracked voice, from his unseen, back parlour.

"Quite, sir," answered Ned, as he shot the last bolt.

"Come in here then, and take a lantern, and go and count the fools."

Ned obeyed. "Counting the fools," was one of his nightly occupations, to be

attended to as strictly as any other of his responsibilities.

To the rear of the small house, was a small yard, and to one side of this yard, was a hay-loft, gained by a step-ladder; other buildings around it, serving as store-houses, for the large stock of oil, pitch, tar, turpentine, and other combustible materials, having to do with Nick Mc Grath's thriving business, as an oil and color merchant. In the hay-loft all the wandering and houseless fools, idcots, and deranged persons, whom we have seen enter the little man's shop, were now beginning to nestle down until morning, and Nick Mc Grath, for a particular purpose, though a usual one, wished to ascertain distinctly of how many such lodgers he could call himself the host and landlord.

Ned Fennell accordingly stept in among them. With all of them, except one, he had previously been well acquainted—this one, however, had been but twice in the caravansary; and was the individual who complained

so much, and so ceaselessly of being "purshoo'd." As Ned now passed through the assembly of miserable beings, addressing or replying to them, each in his own dialect, he was much struck with the quantity of witless words, strung together by the new comer; and once, as the man glanced up at him, from under the broad, flapping brim, of his old straw hat, Ned's mind suddenly started, as it were, and a most disagreeable feeling came over him, which he could neither account for, nor define. It was, however, a true feeling, although not warranted by any proces of ratiocination—well grounded instinct, far beyond, at that moment, all the pretensions of reason.

"Seven of them to-night, sir," said Ned to his master, as he returned from the inspection.

"All the betther, Ned, the more, the betther; the more fools in the house, the more luck to the house;—here Nelly Breehan—bring the bread and the milk; seven half-loaves in the basket, and seven pints of milk in the can.

There's seven of them to-night, Nelly—so, get their supper quick."

Nelly Breehan soon obeyed her master's orders; and Nick Mc Grath having put on his exceedingly low-crowned hat, over his brown scratch wig, and, after having buttoned up to his chin the snuff-colored surtout, which reached from that chin to his very heels, took the lantern in his hand, and went, followed by Ned with the provisions, up and into the hay-loft.

It's tenants were quickly astir. The gigantic, half-naked figure, who had first entered the house, was now also the first person to scramble for his supper. He had quite burrowed into the hay, and came galloping forward on all fours.

"A-rodge, a-rodge," he bellowed out—"give me—give—give—" and he snatched half a loaf, made a nearly successful grasp at another, and then fiercely attacked the milk-can, the contents of which, he would most likely have

dashed about the loft, had not yellow George, the caustic ideot, charged forward to the rescue.

"Go-long you *omadhawn*," he said, approaching the point of his fore-finger to Mickle's very eyelashes, while his red, little eyes glowed —"I'll run you through, you beggin' *bochach*—by the vartue of our oath, I'll run you through, you big nothin'!"

His fierce glance, and terrible threat, seemed to produce an instantaneous effect on the ravenous giant, who, twisting round still on all fours, and crying out—"oh ah! oh ah!—a-rodge, a-rodge—oh! ah! oh!" darted back into his den of hay.

"There's no demand, Budgy Donally." George then enquired, ere he would receive his own proffered portion of supper—meaning thereby, that he was to be under no obligation for the food;—and it may be noticed here, by the way, that poor George used to give a new

name, out of his own head, to every person of his acquaintance, the moment such person first met his eye, and never afterwards did he forget that name, nor cease to apply it to it's object. Heaven only knows from what partial remembrances, if former associations arose, in his estimation, the fitness of the name to the person; perhaps—for George had not always been a fool—from some inexplicable confounding of two individuals together, one of them seen and known in bygone days; perhaps—but, indeed it would be but waste of time to try any longer after a solution of the puzzle.

"There's no demand, Budgy Donally."

"No, indeed, George," answered Nick Mc Grath.

"There's no demand, Beauguard," addressing Ned Fennell.

"Yes—I have a demand, George—" George sprang at him.

"You lie, you beggar—you lie; we'll give

cakes and wine for it—by vartue o' my oath we'll throw you cakes an' wine—there's no demand on the provisions, Beauguard."

" No, then, George, all free."

" I'll throw you cakes an' wine—an' I'll get you the mess of the regiment, Beauguard—an' I'll fix *you* in my uncle's house, Budgy Donally, where you'll have lashen's galore—" and George sat down on the hay, to munch his bread, and sip his milk, decorously.

" Here, take this, poor boy," said Nick Mc Grath to the suffering youth who had been " burned wid the frost."

" I dont see what it is that brings me here, poor boy like me, that's entirely burned wid the frost: I don't see that I'm of any use to anybody, no more nor a bit of wet brown paper; no, by the good troth—" thus he whined as he accepted his supper; and then he retired with it into a corner, and there went on rocking his body to and fro, for every bit and sup he took.

"A dhrop o' the crathur will make us glad;
Too much o' the crathur will make us mad;
But father an' mother,
And sister an' brother,
Will all take a dhrop in their turn."

"An that's a good song, I believe," cried Paddy Moran, after he had finished his melody, —his voice, whether he sang poetry or spoke prose, sounding as if it came bubbling through jelly. And then he took up another stray verse

"Och! mavrone that ever I married!
It laves me here to sigh an' to moan,
Weepin' an' wailin', an' rockin' the cradle,
An' plasin' a child that is none o' my own."

"And that's a bit of another good song, I'm thinkin'" and Paddy jerked his head from shoulder to shoulder, attentively addressing his finger nails, as if they were the judges to decide whether his songs were good or bad; and then he began what he called a dance, wheeling round and round, or jumping upwards on one spot as fast as he could, like a dancing dervise.

Dick, the calculating fool, took his supper with the most impressive gravity, having first shaken hands in silence with his two helpers. The deaf and dumb ideot distorted his face into very villanous expressions of glee, as he accepted his; and the new comer jabbered away on the topic or his being hunted and "purshood" everywhere he went.

Paddy Moran, who had sung and danced, according to his usual mode, an application for relief, now also accepted his rations, but only passed them from one of his hands to another without tasting them. He had supped before, and had now no wish for food; and whenever such was the case Paddy would either give away or throw away the victuals which his stomach did not for the moment require. So he jerked himself about the loft, as if considering what was to be done with his own share of bread and milk.

As he passed the lair of the ever ravenous Mickle, that poor human beast thrust his head

upward through the hay, and glaring intensely, though harmlessly, at Paddy, exclaimed—

"Murther, a-rodge! give, give."

"Here, then—ate!—ate this very minute, or I'll murther you!—ate I bid you!" answered Paddy Moran—"ate an' dhrink—ate an' dhrink."

He began tearing, as fast as he could, the loaf into by no means little bits. The mouth of the huge head gaped and was instantly ready for them. Paddy thrust three or four pieces, one after another, into the cavity, and then, raising his noggin of milk as high in the air as he could, poured the liquid upon them, fiercely threatening all the while that if Mickle did not "ate, ate" and "dhrink, dhrink" as quick as was humanly possible, he would inflict upon him some grievous bodily harm; and Mickle, evidently frightened, obeyed him as well as he could.

Yellow George having now disposed of his evening meal, walked about the loft, his arms

folded, and something approaching to an unnatural smile round his mouth, while his little piggish eyes twinkled with insane sharpness of meaning.

"That was a great race you rode at the Corragh, Square Reeves," he said, addressing 'the boy that was burned wid the frost;' "by the vartue of my oath it was a great race you rode—the day that you had the tassels to your cap, an' the pay green jacket, an' the doe-skin on."

"In troth," answered Square Reeves, "I do go moping along, an' I never know where I'm goin' at all—I do be goin' along, along like an owl of a sunny day, an' I do be knockin' myself agin this thing an' that thing,—An' no more good in me than there's in a hen on the wather."

"I gie' ye my oath, Beauguard," resumed Yellow George, addresing Ned Fennell—"I gie ye my oath, I seen noine hundred an' nointy-noin, like you, cut down by the man

with the pepper and salt coat, at Jack Archer's."

"Faith and the man with the pepper and salt coat was'nt idle George."

"It was the time my uncle an' myself was over with the Prince o' Wales—the time we were clarkin' for him.'

"Oh, I know, George—the time the Prince o' Wales had you and your uncle whipped for thieving."

"You lie, you Roman vagabon'—there's none of the breed that come up on our floor to be called a thief—I'll run you through by herins, you *bochach.*"

"There's no where I go but they're purshooin' me, up an' down, an' backard and forard; an' goin' wid the wind or agin the wind—they're always an' ever a purshooin' o' me—" gabbled the new come fool.

George turned round and twinkled his red eye at the fellow, scanned him closely, and to hint the insignificance of the person he in-

pected, said—" 'twould be hard to strip a breeches off of a bare thigh."

He then suddenly seemed struck at something very interesting in this man; he poked out his chin, and twinkled his eyes at him more quickly than ever: and extended his mouth from corner to corner, almost across his face while he added :—

" Hah! it was a bitther cowld day, the first day you were hanged, Johnny Rafferty."

Ned Fennell now also fixed his eyes on the fool; though he could not yet arrive at any distinct conclusion about him; in fact, George's new name for him, threw our friend Ned much off his guard, to say nothing of the downcast face being still quite hidden by the old straw hat.

" An' the Prince o' Wales," continued George, " sent my uncle an' myself to find out how you made your escape from the second hangin', Johnny, an' we found out that it was the devil carried you off, Johnny Rafferty—

the Romans is sure of Heaven, Beauguard—we only thry—by the vartue o' my oath, one Protestan, is as strong as three Romans; bad time with the wavers, Budgy Donally, all broth an' no mate."

At this moment, by judicious manœuvering around George's Johnny Rafferty, Ned Fennell became positive that he saw before him the detested Robin Costigan. His first impulse was to pounce on the villain, even for whose cruelty to the little girl, Mary Cooney, still well remembered, Ned felt towards him the greatest indignation and loathing: but another identification of another person now suddenly took place in his mind; he believed that the girl who had made an appointment with him for that evening in Joan Flaherty's cabin, among the shower of houses, was no other than that very Mary Cooney; and his passionate inclination to knock Costigan down, and bind him, and drag him to goal, was replaced by a great anxiety to speak with the beggar girl,

and by a resolve not to take any decided step against her atrocious tyrant until after he should have done so. He did not indeed reason himself into this determination, nor could he pretend to himself that it was a wise thing after all, to leave the old robber and goal-breaker free under his master's roof even for the shortest possible space of time. A great wish to keep his appointment, chiefly indeed, if not wholly and solely shaped Ned's conduct. At all events, assuming as much unconsciousness as he could, of the fearful discovery he had just made; Ned Fennell rather hurriedly convoyed Nick Mc Grath down the step ladder of the hay-loft, and then, unobserved by the old man, but not by Nelly Brechan, his housekeeper, raced at good speed towards Gallow's Green.

CHAPTER IV.

"Is there any unfit feeling in the hurry I am in to meet this young girl?" questioned Ned Fennell of himself, as he approached the shower of houses. His boyish acquaintanceship long ago, with poor little Mary Cooney, her gratitude for his school-boy chivalrous protection, and for his scrap of bread, and sip of milk; the loveliness of her features, and person, even at that time: her parting from him, and the earnest kiss which accompanied it; all this came to his recollection, and as he proposed to his own heart the query just recorded, he

suddenly stopped a few minutes in his speed, to follow up the inward investigation.

Did he seek in maturer years, to take advantage of Mary's early interest for him, and which from some part of her conversation, in Nick Mc Grath's shop, as well as from the soft tones of her voice, he told himself still remained unabated? Should the untaught, and primitive creature, in her approaching interview with him, unwittingly, and sinlessly overstep any of the bounds of feminine reserve, and self protection, would he countenance her mistake? "No!" He stamped his foot smartly on the ground. "No, Helen!" was his heart's answer, addressed to the young lady whose name he mentioned, just as if she herself had been present, and had tartly catechised him on the subject. "No, Helen, my love for you, charms me like a spell, against even a thought of harm towards poor Mary Cooney; or, even if it did not, even if I loved you not—I hope —oh, I do firmly hope and trust, that—wild as

many people call me—I should still be able to act as I ought to act, for poor Mary's own sake, and out of love and fear of my God first of all; no, no, I thank Him, I have not yet learnt to "laugh at my catechism," so come along then master Neddy!"

His foot scarcely touched the threshold of Joan Flaherty's house, when the trebly patched door of the hotel was suddenly, though cautiously pulled open on the inside, and a tall, slight girl closely confronted him, in the almost perfect darkness at that end of her apartment.

"Your name, good girl?" whispered the visitor.

"Och! what 'ud it be bud Mary Cooney," she whispered in her turn.

"I thought so; poor child! poor girl! and how have you been these many, many years?"

He extended his hand. She took it in hers, trembling all over.

"Before I say anything else to you, I bid God bless you; an' be good to you, sir—for I see you're still as tenther-hearted, an' as pityin'

to me as when you were the little *gorsoon* that shared his own bit an' sup wid the poor, shoolin' little girl, an' pelted down Darby Cooney for her;—och! och! an' its often an' often I thought about you sence that time; Darby Cooney's stick was never over me, an' och, sure that was every day, that I did not say to myself, if the beautiful an' the tenther-hearted little boy was here, he'd help the lone orphan."

"And you never said a truer word in your life, Mary; but tell me, do you still live with that old scoundrel?"

"Och, an' sure I do—how can I help it? Its sore agin my nature, an' my thoughts, an' my wishes, but how can I help it? I wouldn't be next or nigh him if I *could* help it; no in good troth I wouldn't; an' that I may be delivered safe out of his hands, is my prayer, mornin' noon, an' night—come this way an' I'll tell you."

Continuing to hold Ned's hand, she led him to the fire, at the further end of the cabin;

lighted a greased rush, and stuck it in some damp yellow clay, against the wall, placed the only seat in the establishment, a rickety, three-legged stool, in front of the fire; made him sit down on it, and then chose her own place on the floor, sitting close to Edmund's knee.

"But surely, my poor girl, you are now old enough, and grown enough to do something for yourself, and now, at least, you ought to separate from the old robber."

"Och hone, och hone, where could I go? an' who'd hould the arm over me, to save me from Darby Cooney? Och, he'd find me wherever I'd go; an' he'd murther me, murther me!"

She inclined her head to Ned's knee; he saw that her tears were flowing fast.

"Darby Cooney," she continued whispering, "Darby Cooney is wickeder nor ever he was; an', not to spake of him at all, there's another hand over me now, a'most as heavy as his own hand. An' the poor little child! Do you

remember the poor little babby I had on my knees, the morning you came in to me, on this very flure—on this very spot, to share your little breakfast wid me."

"I do indeed remember the wretched creature."

"Well. That little babby died in my arms; och-hone, och-hone, I cried my plenty o' the salt tears over the little corpse; for, that little babby used to thry an' hide itself in my bosom, when Darby Cooney would roar at it; an' I was o' the mind, that it had the love for me, an' the love for it was in my own heart surely; och, I cried bitther over it, good troth, I did."

She became more agitated, but went on.

"The little babby died, an' sore did I miss it. I was now left alone entirely, entirely, with Darby Cooney, an' no livin' thing to care for me; and och it was then I used to bring to mind, over an' over, that the little babby an' yourself were the only two cratures that ever had the love for me. Yis—there was

a poor little doggy, that used to go about wid us on our thravels; an' it would lie at my feet, to warm 'em in the could nights, and lick them an' my hands all over, and stand forenent me, on the road, an' wag its tail, an' look up into my eyes; an' I thought that poor brute crature had a liking for me too—an' well in my heart I was fond of it, in return; but Darby Cooney killed it—when he saw the love we had for one another, he killed it wid one blow of his stick ov a mornin' when he was batin' me, and when the little dog snarled at him for the same; och, aye, he killed id, at one blow! And things that had no life in 'em I used to thry an' love too, bud he would'nt let me; the handsome posies in the fields, an' in the ditches, an' the hedges along the roads; I used to pull 'em, an' hould 'em in my hand, an' look at 'em, and smell to 'em, and think they made my life a little happier. Bud he would take them from me too, an' throw 'em away, or stamp his feet on 'em, an' tell me they made me idle, an' curse them an' me, and threaten

to bate me well if ever I minded 'em agin. Bud och, it's talking to no purpose I am; I have other words to say to you—the words that I promised to say."

"God help you poor girl." said Ned Fennell.

"Amin, an' amin, God help me."

"Whose hand is the other hand, that is now over you, along with Darby Cooney's?"

"Do you call to mind, the bould, wicked, young boy, that was sittin' at this fire, the same mornin', I spoke about, awhile sence?"

"Yes, I recollect the promising young gentleman, well."

"He's a big boy now, an' a sthrong boy, an' more wicked now he's sthrong, an' he hates me, an' hates the ground I thread on—aye, an' hates every livin' crature, I believe, the same that he hates me,—he hates even Darby Cooney, tho' they're all an' all together; an' his hand it is that's as heavy over me now, as Darby Cooney's own hand ever was."

"Was that the fellow, who watched you

while you were speaking with me a while since, in the town below."

"It was his own self. Darby Cooney and that boy are afeard that if I went from 'em I'd turn informer on 'em; an' the other day they both swore out—oaths terrible enough to rise the roof o' the house, that they'd have my blood, and berry my corpse where no one could ever find it; and that no churchyard sod should cover it if I went from 'em."

"You must leave them, for all that," said Ned thoughtfully.

She looked up into his face eagerly, her blue eyes, still running over with tears. For the first time since he had entered the hovel he now observantly regarded her features. They were ten times more beautiful than in childhood they had been, and her person and limbs, though poorly and even scantily clothed, were of exquisite proportion.

"How very like you, Helen!" soliloquised Ned "how very like you, my own Helen!"

His own Helen? and Gaby Mac Neary not knowing a word about the matter? "Blur-an-ages." Ah, poor Ned, so much for your worldly wisdom.

"Did I hear you rightly that time?" asked poor Mary Cooney, as she still looked up at him.

"You did, my poor girl."

"An' did you mane that it's yourself that would make me go away from Darby Cooney?"

"Yes, indeed, I meant that, Mary."

"Och, the Heavens reward you for the word, and put the good luck in your road, for ever an' ever!"

She gently took his hand, which hung down by the side of the three-legged stool, placed it in both of hers, and continued.

"It calls to my mind, stronger nor ever, the words you said to me, an' that I ever an' always thought of, from that day to this—the mornin' you came in here, many's the long, weary year ago, to give me the good, warm milk, and the good, white bread."

"And what words were they, Mary?"

"Och, shure you tould me, that when you'd grow up, an' be a young man, an' have money as your father used to have it, you'd share your dinner wid me, as well as your breakfast; an' that, still an' ever you'd let me be near you, an' save me from Darby Cooney's hand. An' now, you're a young man, an' now you have the money, by coorse; an' now, I'll come to you, from Darby Cooney; och, I'll watch over you, an' I'll run on your errands, to the world's end; an' I'll do every thing in your house, to make you like me, an' to make you have the happy heart; an' I'll love you as well, och aye, as well as ever I loved the poor, little babby; an'—"

"My poor girl, listen to me. I will take you from Darby Cooney. I can do that at least. You shall not be his poor, terrified slave for a day longer. Do you remember the good old priest, that came in here, the last night I saw you?"

"I remember a very good, ould man coming

in, an' axin' me a great many things; bud, I didn't know before now, he was a priest; I did'nt b'lieve id I mane, for Darby Cooney tould me he was a bad man, "a big ould divil," he said; an' och, it's often he tould me the same afore, of other good men that I b'lieved were priests; good men, that used to meet us on the roads, when the crowds would be comin' out of the house, that they called the chapel o' God—but Darby Cooney used to call it "ould Nick's house," an' tell me if I went into it, the priests would lay hould on me, an' drag me to the gallows, an' hang me; an' then, I used to ax him, what was the manin' of the chapel o' God—" Ned Fennell interrupted her, shuddering.

"Stop Mary, stop; tell me no more of those things, and not a word more about Darby Cooney. We'll never speak of him any more at all; we'll try and forget him, and everything he ever told you, and every thing about him. But listen to me now. Listen to me well, poor Mary, I will try and make that good, old

priest your friend; and I'll be your friend myself, Mary; and together we will take you from Darby Cooney, and keep the arm over your head, to save you from his threats; and the word I spoke to you, when I was a little boy, I will keep with you now, and to the day of my death, or to the day of your death; yes, my poor girl, you shall indeed share my breakfast, and share my dinner, and share my purse too, as long as it pleases God Almighty to give me a breakfast, or a dinner, or a sixpence for myself; and that good, old priest, Mary, will tell you what the chapel of God is, and make you know what to say, and what to do, in God's chapel, that so you may grow to be good, and happy, and have the whole world love you; and I will love you too, Mary. I will love you with a brother's tenderest love; and, poor child—"

Ned's own voice here failed him, and he stopt speaking. Her eyes had been fixed upon his face all the time he was addressing her. She

now saw his quivering lip, as she heard his broken tones, and suddenly falling on her knees, and clasping her hands, while she still looked up at him, tried to utter the gratitude, the love and the happiness of her hitherto miserable young heart; but the effort was vain; her beautiful lips only moved in silent spasms; her beautiful throat only worked in unison with them; and, at last, she covered her face with her hands, and sobbed and wept, loudly and passionately.

"And I must leave you now, Mary," resumed Ned Fennell, "and the first thing I shall do, is to go to that good priest," she started up, clapping her hands and interrupted him.

"Och, yes, yes; quit me! quit me! its only too long you are here! an' all my fault, all my fault! See what the love for you made me do! an' that's not the way the love ought to show itself—bud the love, put the danger out o' my head; the Lord forgi' me for it! Run home,

run your ways home! Darby Cooney is within your doors this night—an' he's within 'em for no good! Och, Darby Cooney would think no more o' killin' you, or any other christian crature, nor he'd think o' killin' a black *Keerogue!** Make speed home; the man o' the house where my tenther-hearted boy stops, has money—an' Darby Cooney is gone to take the money; an' the one he has made as wicked as himself, is on the watch for him. Make speed home I say! Make speed, an' lay hands on Darby Cooney; an' hould him fast, fast, fast! Be bowld an' sthrong, an' may the Heaven's be your safeguard! an' don't mind goin' to that good priest to-night, or we both may suffer for it; only make speed home—make speed home."

"Good night then, my poor girl." He again held out his hand; she took it in one of her's, but threw the other round his neck, and kissed his

* A species of black beetle.

lips, as she had done many years ago, at their first parting; and Ned Fennell received her kiss without infringing one jot upon the resolutions he had formed before entering the cabin.

But he did not take her advice, to go straight home, without calling on Father Connell, and in so doing Ned was wrong; almost fatally wrong.

CHAPTER V.

Our disreputable old acquaintance had spent more than one night before the present one, in Nick Mc Grath's hay-loft, and he did not for the purpose which had brought him there, remain idle or unobservant. He contrived to discover that the kitchen window which looked into the yard, could from the circumstance of its turning on hinges, be opened by pushing it inward, provided its little bolt were first slipped back;

and again, that as it admitted daylight through oiled paper, instead of glass, it would not be very difficult to get one's hand inside this frail barrier, and thereby undo the bolt, which to one side fastened the sash to the window frame. He further found out, that Nelly Breehan had charge of the key of the hall door, and that she used to place it every night in the salt-box over the kitchen fire; nor did he allow himself to remain ignorant of the positions in the little old house, of the sleeping apartments of Nick Mc Grath, his apprentice, and his housekeeper.

In Nick Mc Grath's establishment, Nelly Breehan was just as much Ned Fennell's friend, as Peggy Molloy had been, when he lived with Father Connell; the old woman would do anything for him. She would, for instance, lend him her latch-key on a night when he reckoned upon being out later than her master or herself could, according to their

habits, afford to sit up for him; and only carefully latching the street door after him, and cautioning him to lock it carefully when he should come home, she would deposit her key in her salt-box; and before retiring for the night, put a "red sod" in the kitchen grate, that, by its agency, he might not be in want of a lighted candle upon going to his own bedroom. And, indeed, it was under favour of arrangements such as these here described, that upon this particular night Ned Fennell left home, for the shower of houses.

He had not been very long absent, when, though in no great hurry, Robin Costigan began to think it was time to commence certain planned operations.

After Nick Mc Grath had collected among the fools in his hay-loft, the tin porringers in which their milk had been served to them, and, accompanied by Ned Fennell, had gone down the step-ladder, leaving them in the dark, the

poor fellows, continued jabbering, each in his own peculiar fashion and idiom, for some considerable time. Costigan watched and listened to them attentively. One by one, a voice fell off from the great clamour of tongues; and, one by one they fell asleep—yellow George, being the very last to do so, as, with his latest breath—for that night at least—Costigan heard him mumble, evidently to Paddy Moran, who snored at his side—"Take off o' me, ye black-amoor's breed, take your feet off o' me—we're free—take off, or, I'll run you through—by Herrins."

Costigan, in the silence, or rather in the general snoring, which succeeded to the general babble, raised himself very cautiously and slowly, in his own lair, to a sitting position; out of the bag which he had worn on his shoulder, he took a handful of woollen rags, and tied them round his feet; first, depositing his brogues in it; and then, with a perfectly noise-

less tread, descended the step-ladder, into the yard.

Here one glance at the oiled paper of the kitchen window informed him that he had been out in one of his calculations; for that Nelly Brechan had not yet retired to bed. Stealthily approaching the window, and cautiously peeping through a little hole in one of its economical panes, he perceived that she must, however, soon go to her sleeping-chamber, as she was kneeling to her prayers, evidently in devout preparation for so doing. The beggarman scowled at the old woman, but observed her closely. Before arising from her knees she piously clasped her hands and looked upwards: he cursed her.

She got up; puffed at the "red sod," to ascertain whether it was sufficiently ignited to allow her favourite to light his candle at it; and while she did so, her own face glowed as brightly as did the "red sod" itself—and then, she approached the kitchen window, and laid her

hand upon its sash. Costigan fearing that she was about to come out into the yard, suddenly crouched down under the window, and when he had cleared it, hobbled—not at all afraid of alarming her by his footsteps—and squatted himself in a remote and gloomy corner. But the housekeeper only shot the bolt of the window to it's full extent. Next, she left the kitchen, to put a heavy bar across—as the old robber could well comprehend—the door which let into the yard; and, finally, stopping with her apron, a fit of chronic coughing, which came on, in order that her master might not know she had been so long out of bed, she softly ascended to her dormitory in the garret.

The small, dim window of her bed-room looked into the yard. From the corner in which he crouched, Robin Costigan knew it, and watched it closely. The incrustations of dust and dirt upon it, served, like a dim screen, to show her actions only in black shadows, yet, even by those actions, so badly interpreted, he

knew she was disrobing herself very leisurely, and he again muttered curses, against the unconscious old spinster, because she took up so much time, in her peculiar proceedings—by the way she at that moment certainly not thinking that there could be any one, in the wide world, so much interested about them.

At length, the little, dim window became black; the housekeeper had put out her candle, and was in bed. Robin stood up, but still did not move from his corner; on the contrary, he squeezed himself, as closely as he could, into it. And, "the curse o' the ould divil be on her lyin' down," he cautiously growled, "what kep her from the sthraw, this night, of all nights o' the year? May I never see the daylight, if I don't remember it to her.

After waiting still a reasonable time, and judging that the old woman ought now to be fast asleep, he turned his observation towards the hay-loft. Thinking that he heard one of the fools muttering, he hollowed his hand, and

put it to his ear. The night blast eddied by him, and filling and whistling through hand and ear, incapacitated him from distinguishing any sound but that which it thus made.

"Curses purshue the wind!" he hissed, making an impotent attempt, as if to grasp and control it with his unoccupied hand: it whistled on, as if in laughter and scorn.

Soon it lulled a little; and again he bent his head down to listen for sounds from the hay loft. But none came. At least, none of the kind he had anticipated. A loud chorus of inharmonious snoring was all that reached him. He noiselessly ascended the step ladder and peeped in. Not a blade of hay rustled. He again descended into the yard, and again approached the kitchen window. Some one coughed inside the house. His practised ear soon discerned the direction whence the cough came. He raised his clenched fist, unlipped, with a grin, his hideous teeth, and inwardly said—

"I'll pay you for this, too, you ould *colloch!*"

The interruption was not renewed. Carefully and noiselessly he now removed the oiled paper from the window, put in his arm, and with a dexterous and knowing application of finger and thumb, shot back the bolt. The window then opened to the gentlest push of his hand; he clambered up to it, and knelt upon the lower part of its frame. A piece of mortar fell from the top of the recess of the window and crashed and rattled among some kitchen utensils placed on a table beneath. For a moment he became perfectly still. Kneeling, as has been said, on the window frame, and also supporting himself by resting his hands and arms upon it, while his head and body crouched down, and poked forward, not a muscle had motion except those of his eyes—and even his eyes could but glare, like those of a startled tiger, checked in his spring, into the deep darkness of the kitchen.

But there came no stir through the house, to hint that the harsh and sudden noise had been heard by its inmates; and very, very cautiously he proceeded to place one muffled foot on the table, having first felt about with it for an open spot where it might rest without causing fresh clatter. The next moment he was standing upon the table, on both feet; and the next, on the middle of the kitchen floor, his ear intently watching the silence, and his eye, the darkness around him.

Every way satisfied with the observations of both senses he next crept to the fire, groping with one foot before the other, and with both hands, before him and beside him, lest he might stumble over, or hit himself against some unseen object. Here he again had recourse to the wallet slung over his shoulder. Extracting from it a small dark lantern, he took the candle out of this, and with cautious and thin drawn puffs at the "red sod" in the grate, soon had a light: one might imagine a sketch of

Costigan's face, while he puffed at his sod; its characteristic features; the puckered action of his mouth, his down-turned eyes, with their scowling, overhanging brows—down-turned, because their glances were darted into the turf he held; the mixed expression of eagerness, caution, malignity, and black purpose, legible over his whole visage; while the portrait was lighted from underneath by the fierce ruddy glow of the sod, not more than a few inches removed from his lips.

He raised the lid of the salt-box, and possessed himself of the key of the hall door. He gained that door; believing it locked, turned the key in the lock without producing any effect, and for a moment stood baffled and confounded, and in no amiable humour, until by peering close he discovered his mistake. A few seconds after, the door was half opened, when, protruding his head and shoulders into the street, and glancing upward and downward, he whistled in so peculiar a key and

manner, that an uninitiated ear would be at a loss to decide whether the sound arose near or far off.

A small, small echo, and at the same time a perfect imitation of the whistle, floated through the stilled street; and very soon after, a ragged, muscular, square-built lad, whose age you could not determine at a glance, was admitted by Robin Costigan into Nick Mc Grath's quiet, peaceable house.

Robin softly put down the latch of the door again. His new come acquaintance was about to speak, but he shook his fist, snarling, and all but growling at him, and whispered into his very ear, " Stale afther me."

The barefooted pupil accordingly followed his preceptor into the kitchen. Costigan produced another supply of woollen rags, handed them to him, and motioned him to sit on the floor, and adjust them over his feet.

" Can't I spake now ?" demanded the youth, as he complied with these instructions.

"Yes, but spake low an' little."

"I've news for you then, Darby Cooney. We must run for it, or we're lost."

"Why? How so?"

"Becase, Mary Cooney is wid the 'prentice, this present minit, in Joan Flaherty's house, an' she's tellin' him all about us."

"Hah! by the mortial! How do you know that?"

"I seen him abroad in the shop wid her, an' I followed him to Joan Flaherty's."

"You did?" He scowled on the lad, as if it were he who had committed some great fault. "You did, did you? You're quite shure?"

"Ay—shure."

"Long threatenin' comes at last then," said Costigan in a low, slow, horrible tone; "bud come! no more words now. There's work to do. Tie on, tie on! an' hurry, or I'll cripple you."

"An' won't you run, while the road is clear?"

"Let you do what I bid you, or you'll rue it, as well as Mary Cooney. Hurry, I say! There—don't stir now, till I come to you."

He went to the hall door, turned the key in the lock, and secured it about his own person.

"Are you ready?" he asked, coming back into the kitchen.

"I'm ready—but—"

"Hould your prate, or—" there was another horrible threat, accompanied with terrible oaths.

"Open your ear wide now, an' listen to me, fur your life—at the peril o' your life mind; do you hear? Why don't you answer me?" He shook his scholar fiercely by the shoulders, and glared, and grinned into his face, their features almost touching.

"I'm listenin' hard."

"Come here;" Costigan seized him by the arm, and hurried him over to the kitchen gate. "Do you see that red sod o' turf?"

"I see id well."

"Mind me then, I bid you;" he applied his lips closely to the boy's ear, and communicated some orders in a whisper, so close and fine, that the opposite ear might almost be said to have scarcely heard it.

"Have you the right undherstandin' o' what I say?"

"I have."

"You're positive sartin that you have?"

"I am; I'll give id back to you, an' shure that 'ud tell you whether I am or not;" and in his turn, he whispered a nearly soundless whisper into his master's ear.

"Is that id?"

"Aye, by the mortial, that's id. Let me see that you go by orthers right; or woe betide you. Here, take this." He placed the kitchen poker in the hand of his young colleague, and armed himself with the iron bar of its door.

"Close afther me now, an' stale asy—asy I tell you."

Without the slightest noise from the tread of their feet, the pair mounted the stairs, Costigan holding his lantern sideways, in order that his follower might have the advantage of its light.

They entered Ned Fennell's bed-room. The bed was unoccupied, and had not been lain in.

"Tis a thruth, by—!" muttered Costigan, grinding his set teeth—"No matther—"

He turned and still led the way onward. They gained the housekeeper's room. She was fast asleep, though her sleep seemed troubled, perhaps with some dream of danger. Costigan raised his bar in both hands. She muttered something: he paused one instant; he perfectly caught the words—"In the most Holy and Blessed name of—" and these words saved her from his hand. It was not pity; it was not a return of human feeling to the heart of the desperado, that staid his uplifted arm; least of all could it have been a religious sentiment.

He afterwards said himself, that it was a passing fright, at something; but whatever it was, the old woman slept on, for this time, in peace.

He lighted the candle she had extinguished, and placed it on the floor, at the end of her bed, to avoid startling her from her sleep, by its glare; and then he again whispered a short command to his pupil.—

"If she stirs, touch her here,"—he drew his finger in a line across her forehead, without however, coming in contact with it—"hould id that way in your hands, an' keep it ready, an' watch her well." He poised the kitchen poker, so as perfectly to satisfy his own judgment, in both the hands of the less experienced practitioner—"keep well in your mind what I tould you in the kitchen, an' have your ears wide open for the whistle, an' do all your work well, for your life."

Cautiously, but quickly, Robin Costigan stole out of the housekeeper's bed-chamber. The lad remained alone, at her bed-side; his

weapon raised in both hands, over his right shoulder, and his eyes fixed in full, and ghastly watchfulness, on the old woman's face. Yes, that boyish eye which ought, at that moment, to have been closed in sweet, and innocent slumber, or if awake at all, ought to have sparkled with the reflected merriment of a mind, amused, and at ease; that boyish eye was distended with only the murderer's stony abstraction of purpose, while the youthful lips, instead of quivering to the laugh, or carol of boyhood, were firmly closed in the expression of a deadly, and unflinching resolve.

A sudden crash sounded down stairs. The aged female started out of her sleep, and opened her eyes. They instantly encountered those which were watching her. A second glance made her understand what meant the figure, with the raised poker, and the haggard, hellish face, which stood over her; and she was about to sit up in bed, and had begun to scream, when one blow descending on the

exact spot, over which Costigan had described the air-drawn line, with his finger, made her perfectly motionless and quiet.

With the concentrated force of his whole young frame, the boy had inflicted that blow; it was indeed, joined with the weight of his weapon, too much for him; the poker jarred in his hands; he unconsciously let it go; it found its way to the foot of the bed, fell thence on the floor, and overthrew and extinguished the candle; and he stood in complete darkness, with, he assured himself, the corpse of the human being he had just deprived of life. Terror, and horror of his own act fell on him. He trembled, his teeth chattered, his knees smote each other; and, unable to stir a step, cold sweat flowed down his face.

His master gained, meantime, the door of Nick Mc Grath's bedroom; and, as he had anticipated, found it fastened on the inside. But he did not hesitate for an instant, forcibly to insert the iron bar between the lock and the

door-jamb; and then, with a single wrench, the door was burst open. It was the noise of this violence, which had startled Nelly Brechan from her sleep.

"Who are you? What do you want here?" demanded Nick McGrath, of the ferocious intruder, as Costigan held his lantern over him. The old man was on his hands and knees, in bed, fumbling under the pillow.

"I want your money; an' there's no spare time for talkin'—your money!– hurry."

"Ned Fennell! Ned Fennell! a robber! a robber here, Ned Fennell!"

"Say that again, or cry out one word more, an' by the mortial, I'll chop you into pound pieces! Come, hurry, I say. The kay of this desk in the corner! Come! Hand it out here!" the villain interrupting himself with a "Hah!" now snatched at a waistcoat, which partly protruded from beneath the pillow. Nick McGrath flung himself upon the article of dress in the pocket of which was, indeed, the iden-

tical key required by Costigan; and a struggle ensued between both; Nick Mc Grath again setting up his cries for Ned Fennell, as loudly as he could vociferate.

"Hah! I see I must stop your pipe, then, by the mortial!"

Costigan placed the lantern on the floor, and then grasped by the throat the still prostrate old man. But his gripe no longer had in it the force of youth, or of manhood; even the few years that had elapsed since we first knew the robber had, together with brutal indulgences and excesses, considerably enfeebled his arm; and in a trial of strength, for dear, dear life, even our little, fat, round friend proved himself almost a match for him. At all events Nick Mc Grath fastened the fingers of both his hands tightly in Costigan's long grey locks, now fallen from under his straw hat, and tugged with might and main. Costigan undid his grasp, and seized the waistcoat. Nick Mc Grath followed his example, secured it at the

other end, and was dragged off his bed into the middle of the room—now shrieking shrilly for Ned Fennell, while his antagonist's curses and threats mingled with the old man's almost despairing cries.

"It's only makin' a fool o' myself I am," growled Costigan, suddenly relinquishing his hold of the waistcoat, starting up, seizing the iron bar, and raising it high over the prostrate Nick Mc Grath. But the next instant his proposed victim saw him fall headlong on the floor by his side, while the heavy weapon came, with a ringing noise, against the boards.

"Here I am sir," said Ned Fennell, immediately after this happened—"get up, sir, and put on your clothes, and let us try to secure this worthy person."

He almost flung himself on Costigan's body, placed a knee upon his breast bone, and held down both his arms.

"Ned my good boy, God bless you, God bless you; and I won't forget this to you, Ned,

I won't indeed;" and Nick Mc Grath proceeded, with as much speed as his haste, fright, and exhaustion would permit, to make his toilet.

"You shan't escape the third hanging, Robin Costigan," said Ned Fennell to his prisoner.

Robin Costigan returned no word of answer. He only rolled his eyes, as a manacled wild beast would have done, bent inwards his under lip, and gave a shrill fife-like whistle. It was a variety in the practice of the art of whistling, in which he seemed such an adept.

"What's that for?" asked Ned Fennell.

Still he received no answer. The ear splitting signal was only renewed.

"You have helpers in the house. Then I must be alive I see. Are you ready to go down to the shop, sir?" he resumed, questioning his old master.

"I am quite ready, Ned, my good boy; but is he safe, Neddy?"

"He is, sir; I have him as safe for you, and for the gallows as his heart can wish."

Was it the tightness of the grasp by which he was held, that produced at this instant, certain sounds in his throat, or was it really a laugh of derision, that escaped from Robin Costigan? His old friend Ned, looked close into his eyes, to help himself to ascertain the question, one way or another. But in them he could discern nothing but an ominous scowl.

"You will now go down to the shop, sir, if you please," resumed Ned, "and bring me up a good strong rope; I must tie this worthy neck and heels before I search the house. Light the candle at the lantern, and take the lantern with you."

"I will, Ned, my good boy—I will."

Doing just as he was bid, with the docility of a child, the old man hobbled out of the room.

"I was in the nick of time to spoil your sport, Robin," observed Ned to his unwilling companion.

"You may say that," he was answered.

"I was watching at the door, here, to see what you would do, Robin."

"How did you get into the house?"

"Hah! you'd like to know that, would you? I'll tell you then. After trying my latch-key at the hall door, and finding that it would not do for this evening, I turned to the back of the premises, Robin, scaled the yard wall, and entered the house, by the kitchen window, which you so obligingly left open for me, Robin, I thank you."

"Curses for ever purshue me! That went out o' my head, shure enough."

"Never mind, my poor friend; 'twas only a slip of memory—and we'll teach you, if we can, how to avoid such little mistakes in future. You and I met before, Robin, my dear—does your memory fail you in that too?"

"No, I remember id well, an' I'll pay you for it, as well as for this, before I die."

"Don't Robby; don't be so particular; I'll never ask you for payment, upon my word;

all that you ever got at my hands, I have given gratis, and with hearty good will. You are no creditor of mine, I assure you."

"I'll pay you to the last farthin', for all that."

"Hah! ha! and you really expect to make a fool of the hangman, over again, Robin?"

"I'll make you no answer to that, no more than to any other gibe of yours; bud I'll tell you my mind, on another thing, as often as you like; an' I say to you now—an' don't let what I say go from your mind—I'll make you rue the day you ever crossed me."

"The snow-ball an' all?—Fie, for shame, on you Rob—you bear malice I see, after play; but no matter. You give me a fair warning, and I had better make sure of you then—keep my eye on you—see that the hangman's rope is strong, and that you hang until you are dead—and even after that I had better see, with my own eyes, that the earth covers you."

"You'd want to do all that, an' more, to keep yourself out o' harm."

Ned Fennell's light vein changed a little. Impotent as the old robber's threat, under present circumstances might seem, still, it was made so often, and with such self possession, that Ned now felt a little uneasy and qualmish.

"So, mind yourself, my *callawn*."

"Well then, Robin my friend, I *will* mind myself. And so, we'll begin at once, if you please."

From his master, who now returned into the bed-room, he snatched the rope he had gone for.

"Hold one of his feet tight for a moment, sir, that's all I shall ask you to do. You are surely able for so much—"

"Oh! aint I, Neddy my boy? Ask himself, Neddy; ask him if I'm not able for a good deal more than that, when he had me

alone here, all to himself; ah! if you'd see the way I gave it to him, when—"

"Don't tell me about it now, sir, if you please—wait till I have him quite fast, and secure for you."

"Well I will, Neddy, my boy."

And with coil after coil, and with knot after knot, Ned soon had Robin Costigan as well manacled as ever was man before him.

The instant Nick Mc Grath saw the process ended, he went down on his knees, beside the prostrate Costigan, and took up his interrupted demonstration of the "way he gave it to him;" clenching his little fist, protruding one of his fat knuckles and punching his late antagonist in all the softer parts of his body, not excepting his face, over and over. And suddenly he changed the single monotonous expression, which accompanied all this punishment.

"'Twas your masther bid you do it," he said, chuckling triumphantly.

"My masther! I have no masther, you ould fool. What do you mane?"

"I mane what I say; 'twas your masther bid you do it, I tell you; an' a masther you have, for as clever a hand as you think yourself: an' I can tell you who he is too, if you purtend to forget him; he's your masther the divil, you jail-bird;—ould Nick, my pet;" and punch, punch, punch, with his knuckle, still accompanied every word, that the exulting old man uttered.

A glare of red light here suddenly burst on the unshuttered window, fully illuminating the apartment.

"What can that be," said Ned Fennell, running to the window, which gave into the little yard.

"Hah! hah! hah!" laughed Costigan, down in his very stomach.

"Merciful Heavens! the hay-loft is on fire," rejoined Ned.

"Eh? what? what Ned? don't say that, Ned my good boy, don't say that," cried poor Nick Mc Grath, suddenly lowered in his high tones, and struck almost into inaction, by this new terror—as was testified by his weak and mumbling voice, shaking frame, and vain attempts to rise from his kneeling posture —"Don't say that; Ned, if it is the thruth you're spakin', we must all be desthroyed, in a few minutes! The ware-rooms, you know Ned — the ware-rooms, all round the hay-loft!—"

Another very original kind of laugh escaped Costigan; his chest and shoulders undergoing quick convulsion, in proof of the strength of the internal pleasure it gave him.

"I know, sir," answered Ned, to his poor master, "I know too well, what danger we are in—come here, sir—" he dragged the bewildered old man to a window which looked into the street, thrust out his own head and

shoulders—after he had with great difficulty raised it up, and with all the power of his lungs, shouted "fire! fire!"

"Now, for heaven's sake, dear sir, endeavour to keep your wits about you, or all will indeed be lost—fire! fire!" Ned shouted again.

"I will, Ned my boy. I will keep all my wits about me—you'll see I will—an' the fools, Ned! My poor fools! Are they to be roasted alive too? Only why didn't they keep off the fire, and the ill look from the house, an' the place, an' such a plenty ov 'em in id, this night, of all nights in the year."

The old malefactor again laughed his own well esteemed laugh.

"Silence! you grey-headed scoundrel," said Ned Fennell, turning fiercely upon him—"silence! or you'll tempt me to brain you on this spot; for your laugh frightens me, like the laugh of a devil!" He snatched up the iron bar, which lay near Costigan, sprang to the window, and a third time shouted "fire!"

Sashes were now thrown up in the opposite houses, and voices, in shrieking alarm, demanded where the fire was; and when Ned answered, they, in their turns, gave him back his fearful cry of "fire, fire!" and disappeared into their houses to dress hastily, and issue forth to volunteer their best efforts to arrest the calamity.

"Now, sir," resumed Ned beseechingly to his master, "do what I tell you, for God's sake, go down stairs, get the key of the hall door, and let in some of the neighbours, to help me to put out the fire—I must work by myself till they get in—Lord help us, what's this?—why the old man is either dying or struck with sickness." He thus interrupted himself, as he perceived that Nick Mc Grath was now sitting on the floor, with his back to the wall, smiling and muttering, and unable to make the slightest exertion.

Ned Fennell stood a moment in almost agonized thought. He then darted down stairs, the bar of iron in his hands.

In a few seconds Robin Costigan knew that he heard the noise of battering at the street door, on the inside; and in a few more was certain that Ned Fennell had, for the present, been obliged to give up the attempt in despair.

"Curses on his gandher head," growled Costigan—"he hasn't brains enough in id to give a minute's guess that the kay is in my own pocket."

Again the old robber bent his ear to all the noises around him.

He heard other and other window sashes thrown up, and then the screaming demands of "where—where?" and reverberations of the wide cry of "fire! fire! fire!" running, like fire itself, up and down the street—the street which, a few moments before, had been as dully and as deadly silent, as the sealed tomb. After this the noise of running feet sounded abroad, of which a great many came to Nick Mc Grath's house door, while voices roared and bellowed out entreaties and com-

mands to have it opened; and while the still gathering crowd knocked and kicked at it, till the street echoed again. "A sledge, a sledge!" he then heard them say; and still the clamour of running feet and frightened voices increased every instant. And in the midst of this uproar the curfew bell, before mentioned, as hung in the high structure, over the Tholsel, now only a few yards distant, suddenly clanged out a thrilling peal: it was designedly rung in a hurried and irregular manner, sometimes slow and low, sometimes loud and fast, conveying to the already terrified minds of those who heard it a fancy that, suddenly wakened out of its sleep, like themselves, it also shared their present trepidation. At all events, as its clash, clash, broke over the midnight repose of the little city, penetrating its every nook, and reaching even to its wide-spread suburbs, no tocsin ever produced a greater panic.

Crash! at the hall door below, and Costigan swore that it was burst open. He was right,

and immediately he heard running and vociferating through the house, and almost at the same moment his apprentice quickly, yet stealthily, glided into the room.

" Your knife here!" said the old offender.

The not unapt boy looked, comprehended, and instantly proceeded to cut the cords that bound his master.

" You done id then!" growled Costigan during this rapid process.

" I did—well."

" Is the hall dour wide open fur us?"

" As wide open as hell's hall dour is fur us."

" Folly on then!" and Costigan jumped up, and was hastening out of the apartment.

" Is he safe?" questioned his young colleague pointing to Nick Mc Grath, who now lay huddled up in a corner, and as silent as if he were dead.

" No, but the fright 'ill do for him—whether or no, we hav'nt time now; no, nor the tools convanient; make speed afther me I say."

In a short time indeed, the two worthies had escaped from the house almost unnoticed.

Meantime, after his failure at the hall door, Ned Fennell had rushed into the yard. Flames were issuing through the open doorway of the hay-loft, and with them came a very horrible clamour and clatter from the poor ideots within it; each wretched being expressing in his own accustomed phraseology, the frantic fears that possessed him. So that much of the ludicrous ran strangely through the fearfulness of the scene. Ned Fennell's flesh crept; but he was about to bound up the step-ladder, when, his scanty portion of attire, fringed with blades of burning hay, the colossal Mickle appeared at its top, and crying out:—"A-rodge! a-rodge! come out o' that, murther o' Heaven! come out o' that, a-rodge," leaped into the yard, clear over Ned Fennell's head, rolled about for an instant on the ground, then gathered himself up, and clambering into the kitchen window, galloped through the house, as he had entered it.

Immediately after, Ned Fennell was groping his way through the dense smoke with which the hay-loft was filled. Louder than ever came the screeches and gabble of the poor fools upon his ear. He called out to them, over and over, to approach the doorway and escape. The obstinate creatures only strove to hide themselves closer in the hay. Choking with the smoke, he groped about, and seized one of them.

"No, you beggin' *bochah*," cried this person. "No, we're free! no hoult is to be laid on us! By herrins, I'll—" But here Ned Fennell twirled him down the stepladder.

Three more of them Ned saved in the same manner; encountering from each similar resistance, though in different ways. To accomplish his purpose with Paddy Moran, the vicious and dangerous ideot, he was obliged to thump him well, and stun him with repeated blows on the head, aimed as well as he could with his right hand, while he held him tight with his left.

He knew that there was yet another—the poor deaf and dumb simpleton; but he alas, must be left to perish. Ned no longer had a second's time to search for him. The fire was rapidly gaining inward; even at this moment of terrible excitement, he had presence of mind enough to perceive that it had been kindled near the doorway. And excited indeed he was; his own brain and marrow felt to him as if on fire too. He began to tear away the blazing hay nearest to him, and toss it into the yard: in a few seconds he gave God thanks, to hear some one else labouring at his side. The smoke cleared away a little, and again he fervently thanked Heaven that it was the poor trebly afflicted being whom he had given up for lost.

The swinging clash and roar of the town bell, now broke upon him. Shortly afterwards, he heard the breaking in of the hall door, and he had help enough. Half dressed men and lads filled the yard, and bounded up the ladder,

into the hay-loft; and in half an hour, by their agency, and that of a good pump to their hands. in a corner, all was safe.

"God bless you, my son," said the voice of Father Connell, addressing Ned, as, for the last time, he was hurrying down the ladder—"they told me that the fire was in this direction, and I had a great fear for the house that my son lived in, and I could not stay away from it. God bless you, Neddy, my boy."

Ned sprang to him. They kissed each other on the cheeks, and Edmund bent his knee to the old priest, as, the "God bless you," was repeated; then, still half choking and burnt. though not dangerously, in the face and hands, he hurried Father Connell up to Nick Mc Grath's bed-room, preparing him on the way, in a few words, with an account of what had recently happened there.

On entering the apartment, he started in great surprise, and some consternation, at seeing the spot where so very lately he had left

Costigan, so well tied up, now quite unoccupied, except by fragments of the "good strong rope," which Ned had so boastfully coiled and knotted round and round him. The uncomfortable threats of the old ruffian returned to his mind; —and this sudden escape seemed to give by no means a pleasant earnest of their being carried into effect. He returned in a race to the yard, whispered Tom Naddy, whom he had seen there among the crowd, and in a few bounds regained the bed-room.

Ned and Father Connell looked about them for Nick Mc Grath. He was still crippled up in the corner, and still smiling, though almost insensible.

"Oh, sir," said Ned to his companion, "it was, for this, I brought you here."

They raised the old man to his bed, and undressed, and covered him up well. Ned then ran for a physician; speedily returned with one, and poor Nick Mc Grath, having been judiciously bled, gradually shook off the first

approach of an apoplectic attack, and regained his senses. Other comforting treatment was applied, and he expressed a wish to be left alone with Father Connell.

Their interview was a long one—it should have been mentioned, that they were old friends. Father Connell summoned Edmund Fennell, to call in another professional person—an attorney. In much alarm, the lad enquired if his old master was dangerously ill; the priest said, not at present. The man of law arrived, and he and Father Connell spent some time at Nick Mc Grath's bed-side. After this, the poor "buffalo-man" seemed much at his ease, and recovering fast. In a few days following he was dead; and as Father Connell and his adopted son sat together, after his funeral, the former acquainted Neddy Fennell that, by virtue of a will, lying in his, Father Connell's desk, and witnessed by himself, Nick Mc Grath, not having any relations that he knew of, had bequeathed to the person who

had saved his life, from the robber's hand, and whom previously he had loved, almost as if he were his own child, all his acquired money, in different shapes, together with his stock in trade, and the interest, in his little, old, dingy house, and interests in other houses of the town.

The only drawback on the full amount of the bequest was a legacy, of a hundred pounds to Nelly Breehan. But Ned could not have been the worse of this; for was not she dead? No—all the credit, of fair intentions to kill her with her own kitchen poker, as well as all the inward gratification resulting from the certainty that she had been so disposed of, we accord indeed to the amiable young person who, after Nelly herself, had most to do with the question; dead, however, she was not, but, on the contrary, quite alive and up, to receive her little fortune, and to enjoy it in a quiet relief from worldly care and labour.

CHAPTER VI.

Robin Costigan and his apprentice gained the street. It was still very dark, though past midnight. Persons all crying—"fire!—fire!" continued to run by them. From these they concealed themselves, as well as they could, sometimes by standing stock still, in a doorway, sometimes by turning for an instant into the seven-fold darkness of a lane, or an open archway; and thus, by degrees, they crept, or dodged on until they were within a few yards of the bridge, to cross which would have been their nearest route to the shower of houses.

But the nearest route they did not contem-

plate taking. Costigan now knew quite enough of young Ned Fennell, to be assured that he would not neglect, on this occasion, to send some persons to look after him, and his youthful colleague. So, turning to the right from the bridge, the pair entered, still very stealthily, upon the beautiful walk called the canal walk, which, for a considerable distance ran by the river's edge; and, having once thought themselves fairly free of observation here, they ran forward with a speed that could only be surpassed by that of two courier devils, despatched on a mission of great importance to Beelzebub, along the kind of black causeway which Milton has built, between his hell and earth.

Gaining the rear of some mills, a good distance from the town, they jumped upon a weir, which in a diagonal sweep allowed passage though a slippery and unsafe one, to the opposite side of the river; and thence, it was the intention of the fugitives, to gain, by a wide *détour*, Joan Flaherty's house.

Costigan, still of course leading the way, had not proceeded, ancle deep, in the foam at its top, more than a few yards along the weir, when he suddenly stopped, bent and crouched down his body, and looked keenly through the darkness before him. The next instant, he turned and stepped as rapidly as was possible through the polished, slimy stones under his foot, whispering to his follower as he passed him:

"They're lookin' fur us along this road; bud come afther me still."

"Who's lookin' fur us?" demanded the boy, in alarm, and he too peered through the thick darkness.

Some shadowy figures certainly approached them; the foremost one, that of a woman. The young observer still looked, till fear and fancy invested this female with a face and features now never to be forgotten by him. They seemed alive too, only that the eyes were closed. He trembled, turned, tripped,

and fell; and as he arose, still to follow his leader, blood was flowing from a wound on his forehead, over his haggard, young features. The persons from whom they fled were, after all, a poor, old, tottering man, his wife, equally old and feeble, and a little grandson then returning from a begging expedition, along the well-known short cut of the weir.

As fast as they had run down the canal walk, they now ran back along it, until they were again delivered from it, into the town. And even now, they would not venture over the bridge they had before avoided. Passing it, they turned into a narrow street, making a parallel with that in which Nick Mc Grath lived. Here, all was comparative quiet; they could hear, however, the distant noise of voices around his house. At the end of the narrow street, they were in the very heart of the town, and in the widest part of it. To their right hand few or no persons hastening to the scene of the fire appeared coming

against them; and they therefore sculked forward at that side of the way. They passed the city jail, surmounted by it's court-house, both scowling sideways at it, although Costigan had, before now, made very light of it's thick walls, iron doors, and black dungeons. They journeyed on, to the extremity of the town: crossed a little bridge, covering a narrow, but rapid stream, into the Irish town; now completely unobserved, raced through it, leaving behind them on their way the fine, old cathedral with its very oddly shaped steeple, and mysterious round tower; turned down a suburb street; gained another bridge of three arches, spanning the river, within about three quarters of a mile of that which they had shunned; continued to run against it's steep rise; arrived on its highest point, and stood still to breathe.

A few poor puffs of breath had not escaped them however, when, fancying that footsteps echoed behind them, they again broke away,

Not far from the other end of the bridge, a wretched bye-road led immediately into Gallow's Green. But, believing that pursuers were still in their rear, and gaining fast upon them, Costigan would not run the risk of mispending the half minute necessary to arrive at it. Nearer to him, to one side, off the road, a new cabin had been half erected; and at it's back an old churchyard cut through to allow sufficient space for it's site; so that it was overtopped by an almost perpendicular bank of loose, crumbly earth, studded—though they were only now half embedded in it—with human bones and sculls, layer over layer. After darting through the open cabin, against this bank, Robin Costigan and his apprentice began to scramble upwards. The loose, dry earth, and the poor relics of mortality, gave way under their hands and feet, and clattered about their ears; but still up they toiled, until fairly exhausted, they at length sank in the luxuriant broad-bladed, dark green grass which plumed

the graves in the most populous recesses of the ancient and long neglected cemetry.

Here Costigan uttered not a word; only growling, as he fell flat, and buried his face in the grass. His companion sat up, resting his back against a headstone, and gazing vacantly upon another, at only a few steps distant. The faintest, faintest gleam of dawn now began to move, like a changing spirit, through the deep murkiness of the November morning. As the boy continued to gaze upon the blank of the headstone he believed that a something, a little less dark than itself, came and stood against it. Still he looked, and the blank, vague thing became, by degrees, the shade of that aged woman, life moving her lips, though her eyes were still shut, as he had seen them on the weir, and her brow was now stained with blood. His hair stirred and erected itself on his scalp; he screamed, jumped up, and ran wildly through the churchyard. Costigan, with horrid curses, also rose, and strode about in quest of him.

When found, he beat with his fists his wretched pupil, until the boy's flesh was black and blue, and even his conscience quieted for the moment under the influence of a new terror. In a few moments afterwards the pair were standing at Joan Flaherty's door.

CHAPTER VII.

As soon as Ned Fennell had left the beggar girl, the poor thing sat down on the straw, which was to be her bed for the night, and laying her forehead on her knees, and closing her eyes, as if purposely to shut out all surrounding evidences of her real lot, began to indulge in bright visions of happiness and heart's ease to come; nor were the long, fluttering sighs that soon escaped from her bosom, nor the stilly and dew-like tears which gently won their way through her shut lids, indicative of any interruption to this facinating series of castle-building.

" *Thackeen, thackeen,** hearkee to me," said a whispering voice, almost over her.

She looked up, and by the dim light of her greased rush, saw a grey-headed woman leaning over the mud wall, famed to us of yore.

" Come here, an' hearkee to me," continued this near neighbour.

" What is it, honest woman," questioned the beggar girl, standing upon the spot which the other overlooked.

" I was overhearin' your discourse, just now, wid masther Neddy Fennell; an' it's a good right you have to be afeard of Darby Cooney's hand, as you call him; for Darby Cooney knows, by this time, that yourself and the young man were together; an' he knows you're afther informin' on him."

" Och, och, don't say that to me, good woman, whoever you are, an' may the blessin's sthrew your path, every day you rise."

---

* Young girl.

"It's as thrue as that your standin' on Joan Flaherty's flure. The boy—the divil's babby I mane, in the shape iv a boy—that folly's Darby Cooney, was on Ned Fennell's thrack whin he came here, an' he hard a'most every word ye said through the cracks in the dour; I seen him wid my own two eyes."

"Och, then pray fur my sowl, honest woman! for Darby Cooney's hand will soon spill my blood, and he'll throw the poor corpse where no eye will ever see id more, an' where no blessed sod will cover id! Och, och, what am I to do? or where, on the face ov the livin' earth am I to turn myself from this spot!"

"You must make a bowld run for id, ma colleen, an' you must hurry too; an' you must hide yourself well from Darby Cooney's eye, or its a thruth that all will soon be over wid you."

"An' och, och, who'll hide me, or who'll

screen me from him? He'd find me out any where at all; oh, I'm lost an' gone fur ever."

She wrung her hands, and beat her breast in despair. "Husth! husth! isn't that his step outside o' the dour?"

Her friendly neighbour hastily dropped from her place on the wall into her own cabin; and the girl stood palsied with terror, straining her eyes and ears towards the door of Joan Flaherty's house.

But the new found comforter quickly showed her head again over the top of the dividing wall, whispering:—

"It was a false alarm, ma colleen, he's not there this time."

"May the Heavens be your portion, for that one little word!" cried poor Mary, clasping her hands.

"But I tell you, you hav'nt a moment to look behind you or before you: if he comes back, an' finds you there—"

"Och, you need'nt tell me, you needn't tell

me! I'll run the world over from him—an' I'll hide—" she paused as she was opening the door, and added, broken heartedly—" but where can I hide from Darby Cooney."

" Lave the dooer half open, that he may be thinkin' id was by it you left the cabin—no!—wait!—don't stir till I go round to you—don't stir beyond the threshold, till I bid you."

In a moment after, the beggar girl heard this person speaking in to her, from her own doorway—the threshold's of the two doors met in fact.

" Are you listenin' to me, good child?"

" Och, I am listenin'."

" When Darby Cooney comes back, an' misses you, he'll look fur the thrack o' your bare feet in the puddle here, bud he mus'nt find id—see: make one step on this, from your own dour, an' another on my thrashold, an' then in here with you to myself."

While delivering these instructions, she

placed in the mire, an upturned stool; the poor girl understood and obeyed her, and in a few seconds, jumped on the floor of her compassionate and zealous neighbour, who, quickly and cautiously, fastened her door.

"You're too purty, colleen dhas, to let us lave you in the power of Robin Costigan—Darby Cooney I mane—afther what has happened; an' young Ned Fennell wont keep the shet hand to them that saves you fur himself, I'm thinking."

"He said, long, long ago, he'd give me money, an' when he does, I'll give id all to you, if you'll keep me from Darby Cooney."

"Money makes the ould mare throt, good child, and if I don't get the price o' new duds, from Neddy Fennell, I havn't knowledge, that's all. Bud there's no time fur discoorsin'. Come, this is the last place Darby Cooney will look for you in; he'll never think you stopt so near him. Bud we'll make sure. An' first we must hide your ould mantle: an' we

must hide this gownd too; an' we must put this ould bed gownd on you; an' we must tie this ould cap, around your purty face, an' your purty jaws; aye; we'll play some o' Darby Cooney's thricks, on his own sef—aye, mostha, we will—bud mother o' glory!" the woman now shrieked out—what's this I see on your bare back, undher my eyes?"

During the course of her last speech, her fingers were as busy as was her tongue, stripping off the little beggar, the articles of dress, that she doomed, for a time, to oblivion; and thus Mary's neck and back became exposed.

The astonished girl demanded the cause of her sudden exclamation.

"Tell me," and she gasped out the questions —"tell me—an' tell me thruly, as there's a heaven above us!—who are you? who's child are you? are you Darby Cooney's daughter? do you know yourself to be Darby Cooney's daughter?"

"Och no, avourneen, I don't know any

such thing ; an' I'm shure I'm not Darby Cooney's daughter—an' the Lord forbid I was! —he tells me I am not his child, every day in the year, to shew me what a burthen I'm to him ; an' shure—as I said to my tendher-hearted boy, afore now—its out o' the coorse o' natur', that I could be the child of the man that houlds such a hard hand over me, an' that ud take my very life, this blessed night, wid as little marcy as he would a dog's—och, no, no, no, I'm not his daughther!"

"An' whose child are you then? tell me, for your life!"

"Avoch, I don't know, whose child I am—may the heavens pity me, I don't know."

"Do you remember any thing that happened to you, afore bein' wid Darby Cooney?"

"No—stop—Bud no again.—There was a little shade ov a notion came across my mind, that moment—bud its gone away again—gone—gone—it was like a dhass ov a song, beginnin' to croone in my very sowl, widin—"

Her new friend interrupted her by suddenly singing out a part of a wild, melancholy air. The girl started.

" That's the very tune," she said, " an' I'm shure I hard id, afore I came to be along wid Darby Cooney."

" An' tell me another thing—do you remember bein' carried about the counthry, on a woman's back ?"

Mary again started, and her beautiful, young face, glowed with intelligent anxiety, as she replied.—

" I do—for the first time, I call id to mind now—an' I am shure it was the woman that carried me on her back, that used to sing the dhass ov a song,– and wait a bit over again.—There's another thing coming on my mind at present—the woman left me in the middle ov a field, one day, an' I fell asleep I b'lieve, an' when I woke, I was'nt on the woman's back, bud on a man's back; an'—"

The listener here cast her arms round Mary

Cooney's neck, kissed her, again and again, but was silent, for tears and sobs would not let her utter a word. At length, she spoke in broken sentences.

"You're my own daughter colleen beg—you're my own daughter! The blood o' my heart is round your heart, and I gave you the milk from my breasts!—aye, aye, I'd know you for his child and mine, by barely lookin' at you,"—she placed her hands on the girl's shoulders, and her eyes ran wistfully from one to another of the features she gazed upon—"aye, aye,—you have his very look—fur he was handsome then, tho' he's owld an' cantankerous now. An' there's the mark an' token, between your shoulders—och, yis, my own, own child you are!" She again embraced the beggar girl, who warmly returned the caresses, saying—

"Och, och, if its the thruth, that I find a mother in you, this night, the Lord above be praised fur ever!"

"I'll make you shure, I'll make you shure. Bud there's no time for spakin'—hurry into this bed now—an' now lie down, lie down—I'll cover you up—an' don't have fear—don't have fear, colleen beg—I saved Darby Cooney's own life wanst—an' Darby Cooney's bad, black blood shall make that thrashold wet afore he harms one ov the shinin' hairs o' your head, my own chona-ma-chree; lie down, lie down, an' lie quiet, quiet, an' never fear. I'll hide you, I'll hide you. Darby Cooney has his match in this cabin, to-night, and hurt shan't come near you, my colleen beg. There, you're covered up well now; an' I'll hide your ould duds—" She stepped nimbly upon her three-legged stool, and stuffed them into the thatch of her house, nearest to her hand—and, as will be recollected, that was near enough—"an' I'll fasten the dour well; and I'll put out the rush; an' then let me see if ten Darby Cooneys dares to lay a finger on you. Often I seen the poor, little wake hen keepin' off the bull dog from her chickens—an' I'll keep off Darby Cooney from

my chicken. Whisht! I hear somethin' like a far noise; don't as much as dhraw your breath loud—an' don't have fear still; I'll sit here on the stool, close by you, in the dark, an' a little mouse 'ud make a louder noise nor I'll make; bud for all that I'll watch you well; and by the sowl o' my body! if a bad hand does come over you—"

She sprang up, seized the only knife in her establishment, the wooden hafted one, and began sharpening it very cautiously, on the bars of her little grate.

"Whisht, over again!" The clang of the alarm bell, for the fire at Nick Mc Grath's house, now reached them. "That's a fire bell, an' the Lord defend your tenther hearted boy from the harms of fire, this holy an' blessed night!"

"Och, amen, amen, I say!" wailed poor Mary in her bed; "bud the fear is on my heart that Darby Cooney is the man that makes id ring out, for all that."

"Never mind, never mind, ma colleen; you'll be safe from him, at any rate, while Nelly Carty's sowl an' body stays together."

She ran back to her stool; after puffing out her substitute for a candle, sat on it, the sharpened old knife now held tight in her right hand, and continued in a whisper:—

"Lie quieter nor even now, colleen beg—not a stir from you—not another single word from you—an' I'm not goin' to spake another single word myself, only I'll sit here an' watch over you—watch over you."

Perfect darkness, and perfect silence now prevailed in the hovel. No stir of her person, no rustle of her garments came from Nelly Carty's stool, and her supposed new found daughter remained as stilly as herself. Hours wore away, and it was the same, except that now and then Bridget Mulrooney gave a sudden tumble and snore, in her own bed, at which misther pig would also turn in his snug corner, and grunt out—"what in the world is that?" And yet another hour might have passed, and despite her mortal fears, the way-weary poor

beggar girl began to breathe hard, in overpowering slumber, when suddenly the watcher at her bedside withdrew the hand which, expressive of protection, had hitherto rested on her shoulder, and putting back with it the grey locks from her ears, prepared them to listen intently. She could not be mistaken. It was Darby Cooney's growl, though now escaping him in the lowest possible key, that sounded at Joan Flaherty's door.

"Mary," he called, evidently with his mouth to one of the chinks of the ricketty barrier, thinking that it was secure on the inside. He repeated the call, with deep threats and curses. He kicked against the door, and it flew wide open. Nelly Carty next could distinguish that he lit a fresh rush, and was searching for Mary Cooney from corner to corner of his lodgings. Next she heard a low conference, between him and another person, and immediately after, rays of red light darted like golden arrows through the chinks of her

own door, as in fulfilment of her anticipations the old robber went out to look for footprints in the mire. There was a pause. Had he gone away? No. She heard his breathing outside her threshold—and she believed that his fell eye, was scrutinizing the inside of her dwelling—or, at least, vainly endeavouring to do so, for, nothwithstanding that the faint dawn began to grow more visible out of doors, little chance had it of yet becoming even hinted in the interior of one of the shower of houses; and, as will be recollected, Nelly Carty had long ago extinguished her rush-light.

He returned into Joan Flaherty's hut. Hah! was he clambering up the dividing wall, with his light, to take a more satisfactory survey of his neighbour's premises? Without the slightest noise, Nelly Carty slid from her stool, and then, without rustling a straw of her bed, stretched herself under the tattered coverlid, as still as if she were dead. Her eyes seemed

closed too, yet could she peer between their lids.

Upwards and still upwards, over the wall came the feeble beams of Costigan's rush, and she soon saw himself, or at least his head and shoulders leaning forward, while he held the light above him, and every now and then changed his position, that he might shed it by degrees upon every spot of Nelly Carty's floor. His glance fixed, and became fearfully steady on the couch occupied by Nelly Carty, and poor Mary; and it seemed to his old friend that he detected the presence of a second person at her side. He was preparing to descend from the wall into her cabin. She vainly tried by a soft whisper and pressure, to awaken the beggar-girl, and warn her against screaming out, or in any other way betraying herself, and was obliged to start up in a sitting posture, as Costigan's motions became more alarming.

"Who are you? and what do you want?" she demanded.

"You know well who I am—an' you know well who it is that I want. I want Mary Cooney—the little girl that's in the bed wid you;" Mary here shrieked. "Yes, that's her purty little voice—she's callin' out to come to me."

"Don't come down there, like a robber an' a murtherer, in the dead o' the night into my house, or I'll make you rue the hour!"

"We'll thry."

Some ten years ago, Costigan would have made light of jumping from the top of the wall on the floor beneath him. At present, however, he was obliged to turn and suspend himself by the hands, from its edge, that he might allow himself to drop easily downward. While proceeding in this operation Nelly Carty standing on her stool, and desperately griping the haft of her old knife, was immediately at his back—nay, she had even fixed her eye upon

the spot where she was to strike him. But one thought of other days, and then a rapidly succeeding dread of taking human life came upon her. Her knife fell from her hand. She did not however remain inactive: summoning all her strength, which was by no means contemptible, she suddenly seized, ere he had dropt upon her floor, both his feet, and shoved him upwards over the wall, until he fell heavily at his own lawful side of it.

"Still have no fear, ma colleen beg!" now shouted the triumphant Nelly Carty, remaining fixed on her stool, her eyes stedfastly rivetted on the place where she expected Costigan to re-appear.

In a little time indeed, his head again began to emerge over the wall, concentrated hell blackening his scowl, and all his features.

"An' you'll thry id again, will you?" demanded Nelly Carty, baring her stalwart arms for another deed of prowess.

"Mary Cooney, my poor child,—where are

you, Mary Cooney?" called out the voice of a new comer, in kindliest accents, under Joan Flaherty's roof.

The poor girl, shivering and chattering in her straw, could not call to mind whose voice it was, and yet, instant relief came to her heart as it struck upon her ear. Nelly Carty did know whose voice it was, and stood greatly amazed, and almost as much afraid of it as she was of Robin Costigan's. A third individual in the neighbouring wigwam, after he heard it, and had glanced into the features of the person from whose lungs it proceeded, began to howl like a lashed hound, and crying out—"run for id, masther—run for id!—" raced out of the apartment, still howling. Robin Costigan himself just turned his head, looked downward, and with the bellow of a wild bull, now dropped of his own accord upon the floor of his hotel, and then, to the observant ear of Nelly Carty, evidently followed the advice and the example just proposed to him. After a second pause.

the woman, from one touch of her newly come feelings, upon her very heart's pith, lost all her former dread of the accents of old Father Connell's voice, and serious and saddened, but with more respectability of manner than had ever marked her expression during her whole wretched life before, approached Mary Cooney's bed.

"You're free ov him, colleen," she said—"Darby Cooney is gone from this neighbourhood, an' that bad boy wid him."

The girl started up, clapping her hands for joy.

"An' who made 'em go?" she asked.

"The good man that you hard callin' out fur you in the next house—the good ould priest that Masther Neddy Fennell tould you last night would help him to keep you from Darby Cooney; an' he went to talk to the good ould priest about you, I'll be bound, last night, afther quitting you, for all that you said to hindher him; an' I'll guess another thing fur

you: the good ould priest is now lookin' fur you, to take you home to his own house—will you go wid him alanna?"

"Och, an' I will, surely! If 'twas nothin' else, hasn't he the power, however he come by id, to frighten away Darby Cooney from me—an' who else, wid Masther Neddy Fennell's help, can hide me, and keep the hand over me, for the time to come? Bud you say you're my mother, an' will you bid me to go?"

Nelly Carty, drawing in her lips hard, was silent for a moment. Some tears then stole down her cheeks as she answered:—

"Yes, I will bid you go wid him, ma vourneen; 'twill be fur the best; t'will be fur the best—fur the present, at laste; an' listen! there's the ould priest callin' out fur you, over agin. Bounce up on the flure, an' here's your own ould things to put on afore I let him in to you; an' don't spake a word to him, alanna, about my thoughts that you are my child, till

another time, when I'll bid you; an' hurry, hurry, now; I'm goin' fur him."

As Nelly Carty approached her door, to unfasten it, the morning's blessed light—blessed even on a November morning—was spreading tolerably well through the interior of her hut, and by its help she saw an eye peeping in through one of the many cracks of that frail safeguard. She started back. But at a second glance it could not be Robin Costigan's eye, neither had it the expression, nor the colour of Father Connell's. It would have done very well for the eye of a jackdaw, on an extra-gigantic scale; and as she smiled complacently at the re-assurance, an uncommonly low whistle, just breathing in, through another chink, quite convinced her of the identity of its possessor.

"Why thin, Tom Naddy, what in the world brings you here, at this hour in the mornin'?" she asked, flinging her door wide open.

Word Tom uttered not; but, half turning his head, without suspending his whistle, beckoned, as it were, with one of his shoulders, to a group of strong young fellows at his back, to follow him into the cabin.

Of this group each held a something in his hand. Two or three clutched good cudgels; another, what seemed a shoemaker's hammer; while two more bore coils of quite new rope, whether for the comparatively peaceful purpose of securing somebody's limbs, or for another, too serious to be lightly mentioned, has never been perfectly ascertained. As for Tom Naddy himself, he had his hands in his waistcoat pockets, and held nothing at all in them, so far as could be seen or known.

He lounged very leisurely into the hovel, and first struck by the figure of Mary Cooney, in a corner, stopt short, gazing and whistling at her. Then he as suddenly scraped one of his feet, and pulled his hat a little downward by way of a polite salute, and passed to Bridget

Mulrooney's bed. The old potato beggar awoke just as he was looking down upon her, his head turned sideways, and first screamed aloud, and then began to scold and curse him. He quietly proceeded to Nelly Carty's empty couch, and then, to the pig's well occupied one, and when this master of the house also began to remonstrate against his unceremonious intrusion on his luxurious morning slumbers, he only patted the animal's fat shoulders and sides, while his scrutinizing glances stole round and round the apartment. Finally he started up, and hurrying to the open door, and snatching his hands out of their repositories, spread wide the fingers of each, pointed outwards in various directions through the shower of houses, and then running himself through one of the crooked ways of the puzzle, and followed by his men, each running through another of its crooked ways, he and they were soon out of sight and hearing.

A few moments after, Father Connell,

and Mary Cooney, side by side, and hand in hand, were also threading the labyrinth. After a few words with her, the bare-legged and bare-headed beggar girl had taken his offered hand, smilingly and trustingly, as a child of six years old might have done; and while he worked and squeezed her's in it, as we know to have been his wont, on similar occasions, she did not shrink from the real pain thus inflicted, as, indeed, she might reasonably have done, but, looking up into his face, only smiled the more.

Nelly Carty watched the pair from her open doorway, till she could see them no longer. She then knelt on her threshold, and crossing her face with her hands, sobbed out, in a weak, feminine tone—"Aye, alanna machree—go home wid the priest—an' may he make you a betther an' a happier woman than your misfortunate mother ever was, afore you."

CHAPTER VIII.

Miss Bessy Lanigan was the proprietress of a small, genteel house, in a small, genteel street, where none but small, genteel houses, inhabited by small genteel people held a place. No shop was to be seen in it, nor any other evidence of an occupant who might be supposed to earn his or her bread by traffic, or handicraft pursuits. Towards its end indeed, a small, genteel boarding school for young ladies, might have been found, but as this was not illustrated by a brass plate on the little, green hall door,

it passed well enough for a small, genteel, private house also.

Miss Bessy Lanigan herself, was on a scale of small gentility with her house, her street, and her neighbours. Her figure was small, and her dress genteel—barely genteel, just a degree or two removed from threadbare genteel; her little drawing-room was, by a series of contrivances, genteel; her voice was small and genteel; her talk small and genteel; her intellect, and her acquirements just as small, and just as genteel.

No person in her native city boasted a wider circle of acquaintances, among the small genteel, than did Miss Bessy Lanigan; and indeed she merited this distinction; her prodigious knowledge of the affairs of others, and her readiness, nay zeal, in imparting that knowledge, would alone have entitled her to it. But the little lady, furthermore played whist and the mere Irish game of five and twenty, incomparably well; she was always good-

humoured—nay, in recollection of former times —absolutely frisky ; but above all other things, Miss Bessy Lanigan was good-natured. How? She had lived a certain number of years, and yet, had never been married, nay, had never refused an offer of marriage; but instead of becoming soured at these circumstances, or envious of those whose fortunes were differently shaped, it seemed to do her little heart good to rejoice in, to promote, and particularly to be made confidentially acquainted with the love affairs of her younger associates, from one end of the town to the other. Let it be added that Miss Bessy Lanigan was sentimental to the small, genteel extent of a perusal of a certain class of the novels of the era in which she lived, as well as of that before it; and poetical too, so far as an acquaintance with the love lyrics of those times, might deserve the term.

Nor was her acquaintance limited to the small genteel alone. Some of the great genteel themselves—Heaven bless the mark—who lived

in a larger private street; in larger houses, and with every thing larger surrounding them, shone upon her with the light of their countenances; and this is going to appear.

On a fine autumn evening, as Miss Bessy reclined genteely on a little sofa in her little drawing-room, waiting for the hour to go out on an invitation to tea—for scarcely ever did her engagements, or her means, allow her to take tea at home—a hasty, though lengthened assault was made on the brightest of brass knockers at her hall door—an oval shaped one, of about four inches long—and, in a few moments after, a very lovely girl bounded into the room.

Had Miss Lanigan known Mary Cooney, and not known this visitor, she might have started at the supposed apparition of poor Mary, suddenly appearing fashionably dressed before her. For the young lady, and the beggar girl were of the same height, with the same turn of figure, and symmetry of limb; with the same blue eyes, or very nearly so, the same golden

hair, the same general expression—their very smile was the same; and a difference in their age could scarce be detected. Thus Miss Lanigan might, as has been said, have been startled at this vision of Mary Cooney in fine masquerade; but the next instant would have removed her delusion, for when the young lady began to speak, and to express herself, through the still more emphatic language of movement, action, and manner, it could not have been our humble friend who stood before her.

When friendly greetings had been interchanged—"Gracious me now." cried Miss Lanigan, "only to see you here, in such a flurry, my dear!"

"And I am in a flurry," answered the young lady, "I've run away from papa and Mr. Stanton, while they are at their wine, just to ask your advice as usual, when I shall have told you something; and I must be back again to them, in time to make their tea."

"On this beautiful evening, when nature's

self woes you, in gentle language, if the absent youth does not, to saunter far and wide?" said Miss Lanigan, and waving her little hand she quoted—

> "Primroses, deck the bank's green side,
> Cowslips enrich the valley,
> The blackbird woes his destined bride,
> Let's range the fields, my Sally."

"Oh, nonsense, now, dear Miss Lanigan—that is—I beg your pardon, I mean—but I have really something to say. Let us sit down, till I take breath. How am I to begin? I scarce know how; I don't know whether to laugh or to cry; I don't know how to say it. A word against dear papa, I will not utter; but every evening, since the last you spent with us, there is this Mr. Stanton, formally received by him, as my woer, and as formally installing himself—the odious animal!—in the office. At first, I could laugh, till the tears came into my eyes, at the man; now, I really begin somehow to fear him—there is such a steady, stupid pertinacity, in his proceedings."

"And you have bluntly rejected him, so often?" said the little cabinet councillor, "and he still continues his assiduities?"

"Yes, still continues his assiduities, as you are pleased to call them. Take a specimen from yesterday evening, of various ways in which he continues them. I had gone upstairs to the drawing-room, and was busily employed with some work, when his creaking shoes and he entered the room."

"Gracious me now! I vow and protest, my dear! Well, my love? There you were, seemingly engaged with your needle, and he came in?"

"I was really engaged with my needle, for I dislike seeming to do anything which I do not in reality do. He sat for a long while on the edge of a remote chair, without opening his lips; his hideous eyes rolling about, as if they were glaring after a ghost from which he seemed very eager to escape, if possible."

"My goodness, my dear! On the edge of

a chair too! Oh, the creature, my dear. Just as if soft things could be whispered from the edge of a remote chair. My gracious goodness! Well love?"

"At length, his eyes fixed on my needle and thread, and he got speech. "Miss Helen," said he, and he stopped."

"To which you made answer, "Sir," and *you* stopped, my dear?"

"Miss Helen," quoth he again. "Do you know what I'm thinking I'll do?" No, indeed Mr. Stanton," I replied, "what is it?" "I'm thinking then that I'll—I'll break your thread, Miss." "Don't sir, pray," said I, "and so he did not."

With a laugh that came from her usually merry heart, Helen Mac Neary ended this anecdote. The little hysteric, "hi, hi, hi," of Miss Lanigan ably responded to her.

"Poor fellow, my dear, poor frightened fellow. It was his overpowering passion for

you, that so bewildered him. If he could, he ought to have sung at the moment.

> "Since you've taught me how to languish,
> Teach, oh teach me, how to please."

"Well, my dear, what did he do or say then?"

"Nothing for a long while, not a word, not a stir reached me. Suddenly his shoes creaked, so loudly and abruptly, that I started, and for the first time, looked fully at him. He was standing erect, one hand in a coat pocket. With that hand, from that pocket, he extracted, by and by, a soiled old pocket book, of huge dimensions, and from it again, a letter, folded and wafered. Then he advanced to me, and saying, "I would thank you to read that, Miss Helen," turned his back on me, and strode out of the room."

"Dear me! goodness gracious, my dear! a tender epistle! oh, can I see it, my dear? can I read it, love?" admired and interrogated Miss Lanigan.

"You can do both; I have it with me. Here it is, and perhaps you will let me read it for you."

"Oh, of all earthly things, my dear! gracious goodness! I am dying to hear it."

"Listen then," and Helen read, with a good mock gravity, the following "tender epistle," as Miss Lanigan called it. The young lady, now young no longer, has handed it to us for insertion in these memoirs; we copy it word for word, and letter for letter; and moreover, we preserve it carefully for inspection, by any sceptic who may doubt, reasonally enough however, the real existence of so valuable a document.

May 2, Anno Domini—

" Dear Helen,

" i hope to be excused for taking the liberty of writing Those few Lines to you, which i hope will be instigation of terminating my affection towards you, or a perpetual Existency for futurity, viz., in matrimonial bands—For i positively declare that I hold you in the utmost estimation, in respect of your principles and other caractherizing transactions deserving the greatest attention; and moreover, my particular motives for addressing thus is, that you would be so partial and kind as to divulgé a part of your sintiments to me, in an Answer to this Letter, which i shall expect instantaneously; and moreover, i request and conjure you to be neutral about it, for fear of extending it into circulation, which would be no addition to Either of us—Now Dear Helen i am candid with you, and Declaring to you in the following lines my intention, i am fully determined

to undertake or rather promote myself in some measure, and as to Land property, its laborious attended By several difficulties, to wit, oppression of taxes and other tributes, high rents and many other inconveniences to what there would be in a situation in the town. Now i hope you will answer this letter in the affirmitive and negative manner, sincerely declaring your intention to me; and moreover, i hope you will make a destinction or rather a choice of the Conduct and edefying abilities of youth for a permanent contract, for I hope to the great omni potent that i shall prove and humble and affectionate comrade until the termination of my existance. I hope you will excuse me for making so free, for i allow i am not qualyfyed with principles to equalize your, nor neither am i descended from such a dignifyed extraction. But i hope to God I shall ratify my declarations if fortune favours me to obtain my wishes or elevates my mind that i can produce a

character as worthy of attention as any other young man of my age in town or country, of my abilities, and I suppose you are not without knowing that it was a particular Business caused me to cross the Atlantic to Philedoa. although at my own expenses. But i hope to be retaliated handsomely at a future day, for i am the person was elected to go, and am the person that is in possession of the deed and will hold it, I shall expound nothing more in respect of that consequence as my acquaintance with you dear. It is still for i assure you its a very near friend i would make such an open about a consequential affair.

Write to me what your sentiments are in respect of me, and if you Encourage i shall more to you, and if you disencourage it never shall be more but Bewried in Oblivion, no person the wiser, and i hope you will do the same, what i should think is a very proper way for both of us. Now i am confideut you have

Intimates in abundance, and i hope as i have placed a confidence in you, you will never show it to either of them, but burn it.

Direct your letter thus, U. R. L.

The name of the town and
Parish forward it soon,
Particular place and it will soon,
Be with me.

Write immediately.

" I shall call to see,
Again in short,
But i expect it will
Be useless."

" No more at present,
From your loving
And affectionate friend,
Q. O. unexpounded."

" Well," said Helen Mc Neary, looking steadfastly at her little companion, " what do you think of your tender epistle now, Miss Lanigan?"

" Think, my dear! Gracious goodness me, my dear," was Miss Lanigan's only reply, while she returned the affectedly solemn stare of her young friend, with a very puzzled look, not knowing how she was wished to answer.

" Do you continue to think it tender?"

"Bless me! no my dear," now beginning to see how she ought to reply.

"Do you think it the production of a gentleman?"

"Dear me! not at all; not a bit of gentility about it."

"Is it quite comprehensible? Do *you* perfectly understand it?"

"Me, my dear?"

"Why?" said Helen, abandoning all her attempts at continuing grave, and again bursting into hearty laughter, "was there ever such a mass of puzzled vulgarity! and without saying a word of anything else connected with it, or the man who wrote it, you notice of course the fact of 'Q. O. unexpounded' placing his own letter, with his own hand before me, in my father's house, whither he comes, as a suitor at my father's invitation. What a "caractherizing transaction," as he himself would call it. And then, you also observe of course the incomprehensible manner in which he

requires my answer to be directed, while he himself is to be its bearer. Why the person's head must be one great ravelled skein of confusion."

"Oh, good gracious, my dear! Surely:—

'None ever had so strange an art,
His passion to convey.'

Poor Q. O. unexpounded! Tell me, my dear, did you return any answer to this strange effusion?"

"Indeed I did, and here it is:—

"Mr. Q. O. unexpounded,

"Your very perspicuous letter is certainly the instigation of terminating my affection towards you, and the perpetuity of future existence—you have full permission from me, I assure you, to promote yourself in some measure, both in the affirmative and negative manner, and according to the abilities of youth, you are welcome home from Philed.

at your own expenses, and I would advise you by all means, to hold the deed, and I hope to see you retaliated with all my heart—as you express it very clearly, calling to see me again will be useless.

"So no more at present,

"From your humble servant,

"G. O. unexpounded."

Both ladies indulged anew in laughter. At length Miss Lanigan resumed.—

"Why my dear, rich as he is, the man must be a very low person. I thought from the first, that he had nothing of a genteel look about him; though, to tell the truth, his clothes are very nice and new, and his cambric very fine. Dear me! How did papa become acquainted with him?"

"That's a little secret. Twenty years ago, he was a poor and distant relation of our family; papa himself sent him out to America, to some mercantile friends, and he now returns

to Ireland, rich enough, in papa's estimation, to become my husband. And oh, dear Miss Lanigan, you know papa's determination, in anything he once sets his mind upon ; and you know if crossed in it, his terrific, his almost maniac temper—Heaven forgive his daughter, and only child, for saying it—and you can easily imagine what, under these circumstances, my fears for the future must be. Oh, I wish, I wish," the young lady continued, her manner completely altered, while tears rolled down her cheeks—" I wish—as I have often wished, since this misfortune began to threaten me—that I had been brought up under a mother's care, and that I had a mother now."

Miss Lanigan, not having heard the last words, ran on—

" Gracious goodness, my dear ; the crisis of your fate approaches indeed, the distress of your plot thickens terribly ! Bless me my dear, what is to be done. Ah, Edmund,

Edmund, why are you now absent from us!"

Helen Mac Neary started up hastily, and seemed attentively studying some little pictures, on the walls of the little room, as she said—

"My dear Miss Lanigan, we are beginning to talk nonsense, I do fear. At all events, I cannot now enter into that question; oh, how I dread to enter into it; oh, I dread that my conduct has been all wrong; oh, why did I ever allow a childish, almost an infantine friendship, to become confirmed into a more serious attachment—at least, why did I ever let *him* know it!"

"Poor, dear, suffering soul!" said Miss Lanigan, sobbing sympathetically, as she rose and took Helen's hand, looking up into the young lady's face, as she stood about the height of Helen's elbow.

"Why, at least," continued Helen, "did I suffer the matter to steal upon me, without consulting my father, my only parent! And

yet again, could I have dared to open my lips to him about it. Edmund Fennell *his* daughter's lover! Edmund Fennell, poorly born, the protegé of a poor priest, and beyond everything else, a Roman Catholic! As to lineage or birth, I don't think indeed there is much superiority on my father's side in that respect; but, my dear Miss Lanigan, papa would as soon make the Pope of Rome, tiara and all, an alderman and mayor elect, of his native city, as bestow his daughter on a Papist—"

Helen said this, with something of a return of her laughing temperament.

"Good gracious defend us, my love! but why does not the youth himself come home, to advise you what to do—or at least, to console and cheer you? I protest and declare now, my dear, I begin to think that he takes your gentle distress, very coolly—"

"Do not say that, Miss Lanigan, do not wrong poor Edmund. Oh! Miss Lanigan—

will you—can you keep a secret—*my* secret? Ever since he gave up his business to enter college in Dublin, with a view to a profession, now more than twelve months ago, I have had a letter from him almost every day—and advice and consolation he does offer me; but oh, are they of the description that I ought to accept? Farewell—'tis more than time I should be at home. And what do you think sent him away from here to begin a new career, and perhaps a ruinous career, in Dublin? Oh, you will hate me for telling you! One word of mine—one foolish, vain word of mine! I was led to say it, however, in the hope that my father might—but I must hasten home—Farewell. Oh, I am indeed very, very erring—and" —Helen added, bursting into fresh and plenteous tears—" very, very unhappy!"

The young lady flew down stairs, without stopping for Miss Lanigan's advice. Had she really come expecting that any was to be had?

Her little friend paused a moment in consternation at her hasty and agitated departure, and then ejaculating—"My gracious goodness! Dear me!" hurried to put on her things for going out to tea.

CHAPTER IX.

Upon that day, as has been observed, Q. O. unexpounded dined at Gaby Mac Neary's. Gaby provided him with a dinner he preferred himself, believing that it was one "fit for a king." Somewhat unrefined, however, it certainly was; but no matter, Gaby did not do it the less justice on that account; and it may be conjectured that neither the tastes nor the experience of his guest found any fault with it. And yet Mr. Stanton scarce touched a morsel of dinner, replying to every expostula-

tion on the subject, while his large green-and-yellow eyes fixed on Helen—"No, sir; I'm obliged to you, I choose to admire."

Dinner being over, and Helen supposed to be in the drawing-room, host and guest remained *tête-à-tête*. There was prime old port and sherry to hand, together with Helen's little dessert, and they looked very comfortable.

"Blug-a-bouns, man!" cried Gaby Mc Neary. "Do you mean to keep the decanters before you all the evening? Fill your glass and send them this way. Good ateing deserves good drinking; and though you didn't stand like a man to your knife and fork during dinner, the more fool you; but I'll take my oath you shan't keep me thirsty at present."

"I ask your pardon, sir—may I make so bold as to give you a toast?"

"And heartily welcome, my buck."

"Well then, sir, I'll give you the-a, the-a—I'll give you, sir, Miss Helen Mac Neary's very —good—health."

"Helen's health—here it goes. Come, no heel-taps to that toast, my chap. But tell me. Have you yet agreed on the day between you?"

"The-a—the-a—the day, sir?" What day, sir?"

"Why, the splicing day to be sure, you great goose."

"The-a—the splicing day, sir?"

"Ay, to be sure—the wedding day."

"No, indeed, sir, we have not."

"And why the devil hav'nt you? Why do you come here sneaking about my house, for nothing? Why man, when I made up to Helen's mother, I didn't give her time to say Jack Robinson, till I had made her consent to run away with me. I ran away with her mother, by Gog, or they would never have given her to me. Well, masther Tom Naddy," Gaby continued, addressing that individual, as he entered the parlour—Tom having left the service of Father Connell, in the hope of "pro-

moting himself," as Mr. Q. O. Unexpounded would say—" Well, Masther Tom Naddy, you lazy, scheming rascal; have you hung Boxer, as I bid you?"

" Oh faix, sir, an' sure I did."

" And sure you did? Well, and you were in a damned hurry, my good chap. Boxer was as good a dog, as ever nuzzled a rat," Gaby continued, turning his face to his son-in-law elect, " and I'm devilish sorry he's gone—devilish sorry."

" Didn't you tell me, sir, never to come before your face, till I had him well hanged for you?" questioned Tom Naddy.

" Go along you scoundrel! you wouldn't be so ready to do anything that would be useful —no, you wouldn't—you'd take your time at that, and be damned to you."

" And the-a—the-a—poor Boxer, sir. What did he do, to deserve being hanged?" asked Mr. Stanton.

" He did enough, and more than enough,

damn his blood—he turned his coat, the rascal."

"The-a—turned his coat, sir?"

"Yes, went to mass last Sunday, with that half-starved, whistling, popish cur there," meaning Tom Naddy, "but I'll have none of them that are reared up in my house on good Protestant ateing and drinking do that—those that are brought up, by old Popish priests may go to their masses, if they like, and to the divil afterwards; but I'll have none of my bringing up, cross themselves in a mass house—ha! Misther Boxer, you know as much now, I b'lieve. Why, Dick Stanton, what are you about? there are the decanters with you again."

Dick Stanton hastened to push them home; his host filled, and drank a bumper, and then resumed, after a moment's cogitation.

"Dick Stanton, I wouldn't have lost that poor dog, for any money. He was worth his weight in gold: oh, I wish you could have seen him nuzzle a rat! And then, he was so

fond of me; I'd give ten, twenty, aye, thirty pounds, to have him back—go down stairs out of that, you unlucky hangman," to Tom Naddy, "you're laughing at me, you scoundrel, though you don't let me see it—go down stairs, or I'll knock your brains out, where you stand, with this decanter."

Tom Naddy accordingly lounged off, and Gaby re-addressed Mr. Q. O. unexpounded.

"Our two bottles are now nearly out between us, my good fellow, and so, I'll take my after dinner nap, while you go up to Helen. And, do you hear me? none of your arm's length work any longer—have you kissed her yet?"

"Sir—the-a—kissed her, sir?"

"Yes, you long bamboo! didn't you hear me? Kissed her, I say."

"The-—the-a—I declare, sir, never."

"Pah—I thought as much; off with you then, and do it this moment—stop—Blur-an'-

ages! what's this? Why Boxer, my poor boy, is it you! Blug-a-bouns! my poor, ould, dog, I'm glad to see you!" and Gaby Mac Neary hugged Boxer with delight, as the animal jumped up on him, whining, and licking his hands.

"I'm not fur bein' too hard on you, sir," said Tom Naddy, cautiously introducing merely his head, at the door, "so, I won't be keepin' you up to your full word, by axin' the thirty pounds that you said you'd give, to get Boxer home again; bud I'm sure I'm in rason when I say I'll take the bare twenty that—"

"By Gog! you sneaking thief," interrupted Gaby Mac Neary, "I'll make you laugh with t'other side of your mouth when I lay hands on you! Get out of my house, in five minutes, or I'll—be off, you rascal."

Tom a second time withdrew. Gaby finished at one fell swoop the wine before him, and patting Boxer, who laid his nose on his knee,

looked up into his eyes, and described segments of circles with the whole length of his tail on the carpet, spoke again to Q. O. unexpounded.

"Now, I'll take my nap, at last, Dick; and so you mind your points above stairs; or if you don't, I hope that some one who has more spunk in him than yourself, may carry off Helen from you, body and bones."

Thus admonished, Q. O. unexpounded stood up, lifted his cane from the floor, where it had lain at his feet, since before dinner, smoothed his powdered and pomatumed hair, felt his queu behind, to ascertain that it was directly between his shoulders, and, uttering a preparatory "hem," accompanied his creaking shoes, in search of his mistress.

Having reached the drawing room door, he tapped at it with the head of his cane; and then, seizing that badge of gentility in the middle, held it before his face, a favourite action of his—for in this position, its golden

head and eyes, and gold thread tassel, were displayed to the best advantage.

Helen had been but a few moments at home from Miss Lanigan's, and the command which gave him the right to enter was therefore uttered in a discomposed voice ; she was able, however, to take a seat, near her tea table in perfect composure, before the door opened ; so respectfully tedious were Mr. Stanton's motions.

Having got inside the door, he made a profound reverence, striking it with the most remote part of his person, as he did so, and then, his features wearing a lugubrious simper, by dint of Gaby Mac Neary's good old wine, he advanced, and to Helen's great surprise, drew a chair much closer to her than ever he had drawn chair before. He held up the cane still, and tapped its gold head against his yellow teeth, while his huge eyes, gorged themselves on the young lady.

Helen suddenly looked him straight in the face, and, in features, simper, manner, and action, he underwent an immediate collapse. The cane was lowered, he rested his hands on his knees, and his glance wandered round the apartment. A long silence ensued. At length he said—

"The-a—hem! The-a—don't you think, Miss Helen, the-a—don't you think that Hessian boots are handsome wear?"

"You pay me a vast compliment, sir, by consulting me; but, I really cannot say."

"Well—that's curious. The-a—you know New York, Miss Helen?"

"Upon my word, sir, I do not know New York."

"'Tis a nice place then, Miss—just when the ship was sailing into New York, we ran short of grog."

"A very graphic description of New York, sir," and Helen's austerity of face now relaxed into a smile.

The wretched creature misinterpreted the smile's meaning, and he felt his courage remount into his heart, whence, a moment before, it had retreated like cold water.

"Miss Helen?"

"Mr. Stanton?"

"Do you know what your most worthy father is after telling me to do?"

"How should I know, Mr. Stanton?"

"Well *I* won't tell *you*, Miss Helen—only I'll show you."

And with a desperate plunge of resolution, before Helen could be at all aware of his abominable intention, he flung his arms around her neck. She started from her seat, and struggled, and screamed, while Q. O. unexpounded held her firmly in his bear's gripe, panting and blowing, as he endeavoured, awkwardly to effect his purpose. The young girl's neck and face were hurt with his odious, vice-like pressure. But, she soon freed herself, and still screaming loudly, fled to

her own room, and locked, and bolted herself in.

In the meantime Gaby Mac Neary's bell rang violently, and his voice was heard through the house, shouting for Tom Naddy, totally forgetful that, only a few moments before, he had issued a thundering fiat for his quitting the premises. So he shouted lustily, and rang, rang his bell, so as to make it quite a little tocsin, his restored friend, Boxer, snarling and barking at every shout, and every tug at the bell-pull. Gaby Mac Neary was in fact the picture of a a very angry man, suddenly awakened out of his after dinner nap.

"Why did you keep me waiting on you, you brat? Why did you let me call and ring so often? And what the divil is this racket in my house?" he demanded of Tom Naddy, as that person made his appearance.

"Oh, sir, Misther Stanton—I'm beginnin' to be sore afeard he's a very wicked gentleman."

"Wicked, you scoundrel—he wicked? Is

that all you can say in answer to my question? Wicked! Why anything of a sizeable fly would make him beg his life. What's this uproar in my house, I say again?"

"Misther Stanton, sir, is afther half chokin' the young misthress."

"You infernal monkey! Is it making game of me you are?"

"No sir—no such thing. They was wrastling fur an hour, and then Miss Helen ran fur her life."

"Where's Mr. Stanton now?"

"The hall dour was open, sir, an' he made his escape through id, as I kem up."

"Blug-a-bouns! Will no one tell me the reason of all this? Where's Miss Mac Neary at present?"

"She's hidin' undher the bed in her own room, sir, half kilt.

"Is she, you lying vagabond?"

Gaby scrambled up from his arm chair, seized his stick and stumped, might and main,

towards Tom Naddy, who, however, by no means waited to be charged by his angry master, but walking pretty slowly through the doorway, went down the kitchen stairs. After him came Gaby's stick, bounding and rattling, while its owner roared forth—

"Take that, you mongrel whelp! I'll teach you how you'll humbug me, in my own house."

Without the slightest hurry or flurry of manner, Tom did take up the stick, placed it against the wall, and then cracking his fingers, and whistling melodiously, descended to his lower regions.

"Give it to me back again, you young rascal! do you hear? give me back my stick, I tell you!" But Tom was out of sight, and remained so; while his master, being out of a fit of gout, only a few days, clung helplessly to the balustrade, not daring to venture down stairs, either after the stick or the person who

had so much irritated him. He then raised his voice for "Helen! Helen!" she quickly answered her father's summons.

"What happened to make you frighten me out of my sleep, madam?"

"I have been grossly insulted, father."

"You have, have you? Be pleased to tell where, and when, and how, and by whom."

"By that vulgar fool, and I will now say, ruffian, sir. That man Stanton."

"Why, what did he do to you? Did he knock you down?"

"I can't, father, I can't answer you."

"That is to say you won't. Gog's Blur-an-ages! Isn't this a poor case! No satisfaction for me, no matter who I ask—the next thing is to turn me out of the house between you, I suppose—will you speak to me, madam?"

"Dear, dear father, what shall I say?"

"How the devil do I know? Do you want

me to tell me a story that you're to repeat to myself?"

"Sir, he had the insolence to seize me round the neck—and to hurt me—and to attempt to salute me, as if—"

"To salute you! you mean to kiss you. Blug-a-bouns, what else would you have him do?"

"Sir!"

"Sir! the man is going to be married to you, and he musn't kiss you? And was it for that you bawled out?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Certainly, sir! and wakened me out of my sound sleep. *Isn't* Dick Stanton to be married to you? Tell me that."

"No, sir," cried Helen, starting back, and holding up her head, while she spoke almost as loud as her father, and all but frowned on him."

"What do you say?"

Recollecting herself, Helen now repeated

her "no, sir," in a more gentle and respectful tone, though not in a less determined one.

"No, sir? By the great Gog! he is though! And he shall, and he must be! By the mother that bore you, he shall and must!"

"Oh, father, father. Oh, horrible!"

"Or you may walk out of that hall door! Do you hear me?"

"Oh God help me, sir, I do."

"I'll make you know he's to be married to you. I'll make you know it before you're seven days older. Blood-an'-thunder-an'-fury! to my very face the young hussey says this! But—I'll—have—my—way—in—my—own—house—or—" (you are now going to be guilty of bathos, Gaby) "or I'll make the devil box punch. Go out of my sight, you young—woman," added Gaby, gulping down a very different word—go out of my sight—go to your own room! By the Hokey farmer, I'll make every one of ye dance from the top of the

house to the bottom. In seven days you'll marry Dick Stanton, my lady, or you may go marry t' ould blind man on the bridge. Quit my sight, I say!"

Helen accordingly went up stairs, almost despairing.

CHAPTER X.

The next day, by dint of unusual gravity and suavity of deportment, Tom Naddy succeeded in making his master forget all his disrespectful conduct of the preceding evening, and once more they were tolerable friends.

In the course of the day, there came a great knocking and ringing at the hall door. Tom answered it, and remained for some time talking earnestly with the visitor, a country looking man, of rather a respectable appearance. Gaby Mac Neary saw them together on the steps, leading to his hall door, and loudly and angrily

called Tom in. To his surprise, the curious fellow was weeping and enacting to perfection the part of one trying to suppress a sudden and great grief. GabyMac Neary inquired the cause of his affliction and was informed that the man was a relation of his, from a village about fifteen miles off, and that he had come to announce to him the death of his father, and to summon him to the funeral; and Tom implored to be permitted to go. After many characteristic demurs, on the part of Gaby, his prayer was granted.

We come to the next day, and are in Dublin, arriving at Edmund Fennell's lodgings, in that city, just as he himself returns to them, late in the day, to dinner.

Going up stairs, and entering his sitting room, Edmund started back, as if he had seen a spectre. In the middle of the apartment, whistling a very favorite air, stood Tom Naddy.

"The devil!" cried Edmund.

"No, Masther Neddy, nor any of his blood relations."

"What on earth brought you here?—any bad news?"

"Myself doesn't know what news there's from the Hague to-day, nor it'sn't much I care, to be plain wid you sir; bud we have fine news at home."

"What is it, Tom, what is it?"

"Heugh-a—sure you don't care an ould crooked thrawneen what it is, an' you so grand a gentleman, here in Dublin now, an' never comin' next or near us, for I don't know how long ago."

"Do answer me, Tom, what brings you up from the country? Out with it at once."

"Why thin I will," said Tom very quietly. "Miss Helen Mac Neary is to be married next week, plase God."

"Married! Come, Tom, don't attempt to play off any of your old jokes on me."

"Ould jokes, sir? Sure its *you* know well I'm no great hand at a joke, young or ould."

"And you are not trifling with me now?"

"'Tis far from my notion, Masther Neddy; I tell you over agin, that Miss Helen will be married next week, as sure as I won't; an' I'll give you my book oath, if you like, that I'd be long sorry to make such a fool o' myself."

"You startle me, Tom—frighten me terribly."

"I guessed that ud come to pass."

"And the bridegroom?"

"Do you remember Misther Dick Stanton, sir, that come home from America, just before you left us?"

"Yes—and is it he?"

"'Tis indeed—Misther Dick Stanton, that frolickin' young rogue."

"Phoh! Phoh!" said Edmund, as if speaking to himself, "it can never be—Helen has never mentioned it in her letters—Phoh, Tom, impossible."

"Well, have id your own way, Masther Neddy; bud I hard th' ould lad swarin' oath

upon oath, not a great many hours ago, up to Miss Helen's face, that she was to marry Misther Stanton, widin a week's time; an' ould Gaby isn't the boy to go out of his road, for any man born ov a woman—no, nor for any woman born ov a woman neither; an' I just tell you that for your comfort, Masther Ned."

"Thank you, sir," said Edmund bowing to him.

"Kindly welcome, sir," answered Tom, bowing in return.

"But he cannot force his daughter to marry against her will?"

"Bud can't he force her out, into the sthreet, an' shet the dour in her face? Faith an' he can; an' 'tis himself is the very ould boy to do it."

"No, Tom, no. Helen shall not be forced."

"All very fine talk, 'pon my conscience."

"What do you say?"

"Don't get cross wid me now, Masther

Ned, if you plase: sure it isn't me that's going to be married to Miss Helen?"

Edmund had been walking about the room, with bent brows, repeating his opinion that Helen should not be married against her will, and he scarcely heeded Tom.

"You'll be thryin to put a bar to id, Masther Ned?"

"Trying?—I *will* put a bar to it."

"Would it be doin' any harm to ask how?"

"How, how—I cannot see that, yet; but I tell you that I *will* put a bar to it."

"Faith, an' fur all myself can see, you'd want some one, wid a little share of brains to help you. Is id a 'torney or a counsellor you're to be Masther Ned, when your time is out?"

"Stop the marriage I will, were it by twisting the neck of that disgusting fool," continued Edmund, still only half attending to Tom, as he walked about.

"Faix, I would'nt like to be in his coat. Will you promise not to strike me fur what I'm goin' to say, sir?"

"Get out, you ideot!"

"Bud will you promise me?"

"Phoh! to be sure I will."

"You say Miss Helen is'n't to be married next week?"

"She shall not, by —!"

"Well, an' that's a thumper iv an oath; I tell you what I'll do wid you. See here; here's two shillings—all I'm worth in money, on the face ov the livin' earth, afther comin' off of my long road this evenin'; they say you have a houseful ov ould goold; I'll lay these two shillings agen two ov your ould guineas, that Miss Helen will be married next week. Asy now, masther Ned—don't be comin' so close to me, that-a-way. Sure you promised not to sthrike me?"

"Yes, but I did not promise that I would not take you neck and heels, and

pitch you out of that window into the street."

"Faith, an' ov the two, myself 'ud rather be sthruck dacently—keep off, sir, if you plase."

A servant entered the room with Edmund's dinner.

"Well, well, Tom, you may sit down yonder; and while I dine, we will talk more of this business."

But Edmund did not keep his word; he remained either quite taciturn, or, after attacking his food with every appearance of a ravenous appetite, pushed away his plate, and muttered to himself, not addressing a word to Tom Naddy. This did not answer either the purpose or the temperament of Tom. After glancing scrutinizingly around the nicely furnished apartment, he broke through a whistle so low, that it might be called a whispered whistle, and spoke, "Nate lodgins' intirely, we're in here, masther Neddy."

He got no answer. His next remark was:—

"Why thin, may the saints rowl a blanket o' glory, round the poor ould man that left us."

Ned understood the smothered slyness of Tom's allusion, and perplexed as he was, suddenly glanced at him and laughed.

"Well, Tom; and had you no business in Dublin, but to bring me this news?"

"What other business 'ud I have, sir?"

"Your young mistress sent you?"

"Never a send thin."

"And you have a letter?" cried Edmund starting up.

"No, I have not; an' no message either. An' not a word from the young misthress to you good or bad."

"What! She would not write to me?"

"No; because she couldn't."

"Couldn't; why?"

Tom put his hand in his pocket, took out the key of his sleeping loft over his stable at home, and gave it a sudden twist, as if shooting

a lock with it, accompanying the act by an explanatory nod of his head.

"What!" cried Edmund, understanding him, "have matters really grown so serious? And so, Tom, you have come to Dublin of your own accord?"

"O' my own accord."

"And the road so long! How did you travel? On the top of the coach?"

"Faix no, Masther Edmund; on the top o' shank's mare; walked id, or raced id, every inch o' the way; an' in the night time, as well as in the day time, more betoken."

The distance was upwards of sixty miles.

"Well, then, Tom, I see you are a faithful kind of fellow after all; and you shall have something to make up your road expenses, Tom."

"Never fear that—I'll have your two ould guineas honestly won, by my wager, as shure as little apples."

Edmund Fennell again began to look annoyed, and Tom thought dangerous.

"Stop now, Masther Ned. Whist, wid yourself, an' come here, as far frum the dour as ever we can; would id be any harum to lock id? I won't spake another word till it is locked."

Edmund turned the key. In two hours afterwards, he and Tom Naddy were on the road from Dublin homeward, together.

CHAPTER XI.

The next day still, and we have returned with them to their native city.

Tom Naddy is re-installed in all his former offices in Gaby Mac Neary's household, and enjoys something more of his master's favour than ever he did. With an unusual degree of interest Gaby questioned Tom concerning his father's death, and Tom gave him a full account of the nature and suddenness of his fatal disorder—"a smotherin' up all over," he described it to have been; then of the wake, and then of the funeral, adding a list of how many little

brothers and sisters were now left almost wholly dependent upon him "fur the bit an' the sup."

Edmund Fennell, not making his return known, even to Father Connell, hastened to Miss Lanigan's genteel little house. He had long been acquainted with her, had often met her, at Gaby Mac Neary's, and quite as often had met Helen Mac Neary under her roof. Miss Lanigan received him, as was her wont, with great good nature and sympathy. She either knew or guessed all the circumstances which caused his present unhappiness; nay, she could supply him with a few more, to add to his comfort, as Tom Naddy would remark. Helen had continued under lock and key ever since her father had informed her that she should become the wife of Mr. Stanton. And the mantua-makers—she had it from themselves—were in and out every moment in the day, preparing her dresses for the awful occasion.

"But it is not possible, said Edmund," that

Helen ever will consent to marry that stolid fellow, in the teeth of her promises, often and often, and most solemnly repeated, in the presence of Heaven, to be mine—my own—oh, Miss Lanigan you have yourself witnessed, over and over, the interchange of our vows to each other—can you do nothing now, to assist us in keeping them unbroken?"

"I declare and protest, my dear, I am ready and willing to do anything—but I declare I do not see, for the present, what is to be done—"

"Miss Lanigan, I am distracted—and I shall act as a desperate man, I fear, if some means are not devised to prevent a breach of Helen's engagements with me."

"I vow and protest, my dear, I sincerely sympathise with you, and commisserate you. You love, and are beloved—and the situation you are placed in, is most interesting and absorbing—and my poor Helen too! What must be her feelings?—

> "With the man that I love, were I destined to dwell,
> On a mountain, a moor, in a cot, in a cell."

I should think myself supremely happy. But still, I ask, what is to be done? I would not be for lacerating your tender feelings by rudely separating you. But be not over hasty, my dear; you have still three or four days to consider; hope for the best—

> "Hope, thou source of every blessing,
> Parent of each joy divine."

Edmund Fennell suddenly interrupted the waving of her little hand, by seizing it, and her quotation, by breaking in upon it, and speaking very rapidly.

"The case is this, Miss Lanigan. Helen Mac Neary is *mine*, by every vow and pledge that could bind her to me—and if I had a thousand lives to lose, one after the other, I would lay them down, sooner than be separated from her—I am no blasphemer, but I deliberately swear, by—"

"Hush dear youth!" interrupted Miss Lanigan in return, placing her disengaged hand on Edmund's lips —"be calm—swear not—neither scare me—by your terrible threats—gracious goodness me! what is to become of us all? I protest and vow—"

"Miss Lanigan listen to me. There is one step, which if taken, would prevent all the misery that may otherwise happen; and you can, if you like, be mainly instrumental, in causing that step to be taken."

"Goodness gracious now! What step? What do you mean, my dear?"

"This—I mean this. You can persuade Helen to consent to a private marriage with me."

Miss Lanigan half screamed at the notion. "A clandestine engagement! And such an engagement!" No, no; the thing was impossible; it would be very sinful, and very wicked, and by no means respectable for her to have any thing to do with such a matter.

It would injure her character among her very numerous circle of friends, who were vieing with each other, every day in the year, to see which of them should have her oftenest amongst them. No, no, no; much as she sympathised in the deep distress of her dear young friends, her interference was totally out of the question. Edmund entreated, raved, Miss Lanigan was positive. In fact, her little, genteel, worldly interests were touched, and that was enough. Miss Lanigan was an instance of a meagre affectation of romance, and solid selfishness, going hand in hand very comfortably together. Edmund now ran out of the house, muttering and threatening awfully.

At the end of the little street he encountered Tom Naddy.

"Have you a letter for me?" asked Edmund.

Tom handed him one. He tore it open, and ran his eye over it.

"'Tis all as I feared," he continued, "she refuses to entertain for an instant, my pro-

posal—Helen, I knew you would, though I am sure you love me."

"What luck had you wid the little eldherly lady in this street, Masther Edmund?"

"No luck."

"Well, lave her to me. I'll make an offer at her, over again fur you. I'll be lookin' afther you in an hour or so, sir, wid better news fur you than you have fur me may be."

And thrusting his right hand into the left sleave of his jacket, and his left hand into its right sleave, he shouldered onward very leisurely to Miss Lanigan's little green hall door, whistling at every step he took—but indeed, not for want of thought.

CHAPTER XII.

It has been hinted that Miss Bessy Lanigan had achieved her present height of little, genteel popularity, in a great degree, by her amazing capacity for acquiring a knowledge of other people's affairs, and by her obliging readiness, in communicating that knowledge. She was a daily periodical of private anecdote, and her publication commenced about twenty minutes past seven in the morning, and did not quite end until about ten minutes to eleven every evening. How she acquired matter to fill herself with diurnal novelty, was wondrous.

But, she left no resource untried for the purpose. As her own editor and compiler, she was indeed, individually a host; still, her contributors were almost beyond calculation, embracing every rank within her reach, down to the humblest servant, nay, to the very old beggarwoman or beggarman at her door, who came to get something from her, but were sent away on the contrary, after giving to Miss Lanigan all they were worth in the world—their malice and their lies—without receiving in return, as much as a potato-peel, a crumb, or an empty marrow-bone.

And yet did they consider themselves repaid, starving though they might be. One of the quality had condescended to listen to their wretched gossip; and so, they felt themselves of importance to society, and went on their way rejoicing.

With condescension indeed, nay, with familiarity, the little lady was necessarily obliged to reward all her humbler contributors, since

stipends, alms, or bribes she had not to give. And Tom Naddy, ever since he had become translated into Gaby Mac Neary's service, cannot be supposed to have escaped Miss Lanigan's constant claims for contributions.

This day, having knocked at her little, green hall door, and sent up word, that he was the bearer of a letter to Miss Lanigan, he was admitted to her presence without delay. The letter, he said, came from Miss Mac Neary, through the medium of her own maid, and he was charged to use the greatest secrecy, and punctuality in delivering it.

Miss Lanigan proceeded to read it. Poor Helen was in a terrible state of affliction. She had not stopt crying, nor slept a wink, since the evening of the fearful contention, with her father. She felt greatly indignant at the tyrannical restraint set upon her; she did not know what to do—but trebly resolved she was, that no earthly power, should ever make her wed Mr. Stanton; yet, how to avoid the

calamity, without incurring her father's utmost displeasure—perhaps his abandonment, and his curse—she could not determine. She looked round on every side, but, all was black, and hopeless. Would not her dear Miss Lanigan assist her?—and again Helen asked for advice, (while perhaps she despised the source from which it was to come).

Helen went on to say, that she had been startled that morning, by a letter, from—Miss Lanigan knew whom—written by him in the same town with her, and she had been more than startled by its purport. It proposed to her to take a step, which it was impossible she ever could take. But, would Miss Lanigan come to her father's house, and, as she was a favorite of his, would she try to gain his permission to see Helen, and then, Miss Lanigan should know more?

Miss Lanigan paused, in great perplexity, over this epistle. She was aroused by a kind of groaning ejaculation as if of utter despair,

from Tom Naddy, who occupied the chair, which, as usual, his little editor had pointed out to him; and Tom looked, and had twisted his limbs into an exceedingly woe-begone expression.

Miss Lanigan addressed him.

"Why, I protest and vow, my good boy, affairs seem to go on worse and worse with you at home."

"Worse an' worse, sure enough, Miss—an' worse nor that agin, if I'd say id. But what signifies the way things is now, to the way they'll be in a little time, if matthers doesn't mend, Miss."

"How so?"

"Why, Miss, there'ull be slaughter an' desthruction to no end, if Miss Helen marries Misther Stanton."

"Good gracious! Do *you* really think so, Tom?"

"Faix, Miss, I'm right down sure ov it. I know Masther Neddy well, ever since he was a

weeny chap, an' look Miss—I would'n't give that for Stanton's life, if id is a thing that he sets on taking Miss Helen from him."

Tom Naddy touched the tip of his tongue with the tip of his finger, and held out on the latter for Miss Lanigan's inspection the smallest possible portion of transparent saliva.

"I protest you frighten me, my good boy."

"An' no wonther—it frightens myself to think ov id. First an' foremost Masther Neddy will take Misther Stanton, an' he'll think no more of knockin' the daylight out ov him than I would ov puttin' my feet on a spidher; fur the poor crature ov a young man is crazy mad, this moment. Well, that's one life gone. Then surely he must get a blundherbuss an' shoot his own scull off, or else they'll take him up and hang him on the gallows, for Misther Stanton's murther; and don't you think, Miss, that it ud be betther fur him, an' more genteeler, to kill

his own sef than to lave id to the hangman to do? Don't you, Miss?"

"Oh, for gracious sake, good boy, don't put such a shocking question to me. I protest and vow I'm all in a tremble at the thought of such horrid doings."

"Well, that's two lives gone, widout any doubt on the face ov the earth. Then, let Miss Helen get over id all if she can. I'll bet any sum she'll never see a happy day agen, an' that she'll dhrop into an airly grave. An' as fur th'ould masther, I'll go bail, wid all his oaths, he'll be sorry enough, whin he sees nothin' bud murther an' misfortun' on every side ov him. I'm only a poor boy, Miss, an' I'd go five hundhred miles on my bare knees to stop that unlooky weddin', if I could. An' if there was any good crature that would be the manes ov stoppin' id, they might be sartin sure that a blessin' ud fall on 'em, every day they'd see the sun—och, it ud be a crown o' glory fur any one that ud do id!"

"But, if old Mr. Mac Neary is so very determined, I cannot see how the marriage is to be stopped."

"Very asy intirely, Miss, very asy intirely. It 'ud only be fur Miss Helen to give her consent, to marry wid Masther Neddy, afore the day fur th' other unfortunate weddin' 'ud come round, an' then, sure all the mischief ud be hindhered at once."

"Miss Helen will never consent to any such thing. I know well she will not. Besides, you don't think of old Mr. Mac Neary, young man—no person could withstand his fury."

"Bud what could his fury do afther all, Miss? Maybe he'd part wid Miss Helen fur a start—bud sure Masther Neddy has plenty to keep her, like any lady in the land. Why, a body might say, to be sure, that id wasn't a right way to have the young lady married—bud wouldn't it be betther nor murther an' slaughther? An' th' ould masther 'ud cotton to both ov 'em afther a while, an' thin' there ud

be nothin' bud blessin's an' happiness, every day in the year—an' thin, wouldn't the loocky body, that brought it all about, be made much of—och, wouldn't she?"

"I protest and vow," began Miss Lanigan, and she paused.

"An' do you know what, Miss."

"Well, Tom, what?"

"Misther Stanton wouldn't fret very long, I can tell you."

"What! Is he not most tenderly attached to Miss Mac Neary, poor man?"

"By my faix, Miss, he'd be more vexed to have his queu made crooked, than to lose two Miss Mac Neary's. I have id from his own mouth, Miss."

"Gracious goodness me! Do you tell me so, Tom?"

"'Tom,' says he to me t'other day—'Tom, my honest lad,' says he—I was puttin' the queu straight fur him, at the same time—'Tom,' says he, 'your young misthress is a

very nice, genteel, young lady; bud, Tom,' says he agen, 'I wouldn't care much, even if she broke wid me; fur, I think I can get another young lady as nice, an' as genteel as she is. I'm not lookin' afther money, fur I've plenty of that; a nice, genteel, young lady is all I want; an' don't you think Tom,' says poor Misther Stanton to me, 'don't you think Tom, I'd be able to get another nice, genteel, young lady, if anything happened to prevent the match wid Miss Helen?' Bee my faix, an' sure you could, sir, says I; sure you're a match fur the best among 'em—an' so he is, Miss; a quiet paceable gentleman, an' very well to look at, an' I do'nt think he'd say *hoome* or *hawm* to vex a lady, fur his whole life long—what do you think, Miss?"

"Indeed, Tom, I do think Mr. Stanton very likely to meet a favourable reception from a great many ladies."

"See now! Didn't I know that."

"Well, and what else did he say to you, Tom?"

"He's no way proud Miss; proud gentlemen or ladies, that wouldn't talk free wid a poor body, they're not the right sort afther all; 'tis upstarts, an' cratures ov the kind, that snubs us poor people; rael gentlemen an' ladies, are civil an' conversible, an' don't turn a snout on them that's below 'em—is not that your opinion, Miss?"

"Yes, indeed, Tom; and you may see that I am chatting very freely with you."

"Blessin's on your purty face, Miss, sure enough you are; well thin, an' Misther Stanton isn't a bit prouder nor you are; an' he made as free wid me, as if I was one of his own sort, afther a manner—

'Tom,' says he, 'I like Miss Helen very well intirely, an' I'm in a chokin' hurry to be married to her; bud,' says he, 'the ould gentleman is an oddity. If he houlds on, I'll

hould on too, bud he may turn short on me, Tom,'—I'd give a purse o' goold that he did Miss, bud there's no chance o' that—' he might turn short on me, Tom; an' if he did, I think I'd get as nice, an' as genteel a young lady as ever she was—particularly whin 'tisn't the money I want.' 'Tis you that would sir, says I;—' Tom,' says he, over agen, ' I think you're not a bad judge of young ladies,'—wasn't that very free of him to say to me, Miss?"

" He paid you a very high compliment, I vow and protest, Tom."

" ' You're not a bad judge of young ladies,' says he. Why, sir, says I, I'd make a guess that way."

" My goodness, gracious! And pray, Tom, by what rule would you form your judgment of young ladies?"

" Did you ever hear of the rule of thumb, Miss?"

" Never, I protest."

"'Tis by that rule that botches ov carpenthers work, Miss; but that's not my rule Miss; 'tis by the eyes I go, like a fellow that sarved his time; I think 'tis a gift to me someway; an' I'll tell you, Miss, the two handsomest young ladies to be met, from the Butt's cross to Ballyvougth, an' thin you'll know, Miss. if I'm to be depinded on."

"Do, then, Tom—let me hear, for goodness gracious sake."

"The young misthress, Miss Helen Mac Neary, is one ov them Miss; an' sure I needn't only turn my eyes across the room to find another young lady who could walk by Miss Helen's side every day in the year."

"Oh, Tom Naddy, my good lad; you can flatter, I see."

"That I may never rise frum the sate I'm on, Miss, if what I'm afther sayin' isn't the very thing I'd swear on the book, this moment." (Mental reservation on Tom's part.)

"Indeed, Tom, I cannot but be obliged to

you," said Miss Lanigan, as she fixed her smug features into the most amiable expression, bobbed her little head and "bridled," as it was then termed. "I do declare, Tom, you know how to be gallant."

"Och, its little I know about that fine word Miss; bud sure, I have an eye in my head. Well, Miss, as we war sayin'—poor Misther Stanton, as nate a gentleman as ever cum across me—says he to myself, 'I think you're not a bad judge ov young ladies;' I'd make a guess that way, sir says I; 'then Tom,' says he, an' he shuck me bee the fist—savin' manners, 'Tom,' says he, 'if anything happens to break the match, between meself an' Miss Helen Mac Neary, you'll be on the look out fur me Tom, I know you're a judge, Tom, an' I think, Tom, that I'd agree in your choice, Tom,' wasn't that makin' very free intirely, Miss?"

"Ha, ha! dear me," and Miss Lanigan again hesitated.

Tom examined her face, and was not slow to perceive that he had produced an effect. She was measuring at once Tom's opinion of her attractions, and Tom's power and authority of selection for Mr. Stanton, while a flitting vision of escaping from her state of little gentility, and wretched singleness, into the wide expanse of wealth, and of married importance, plainly irradiated it.

"The greatest fault, or may be 'tis his misfortune, Miss, that Misther Stanton has—"

Miss Bessy Lanigan started from her reverie. She had just dressed Mr. Stanton with all the amiabilities that could adorn his sex, and Tom Naddy hinted at a fault.

"Mr. Stanton's fault, my good boy?" she asked, feelingly.

"Bee my faix, Miss, I don't see a fault, to call id a fault, about the good gentleman, only he's not—a-a—when—he's not—" and Tom polished the crown of his hat with the sleeve of his coat—"he's not over handy at coortin',

Miss; an' so, he'd lave id to another, you know, to manage points for him."

"Is that all, Tom? And he has no other faults, you think?"

"Avoch, not he, the nice young gentleman —an' a lady might turn him round her little finger, Miss."

"That's no fault, indeed Tom; your very presuming, forward young men, Tom, make too free; and after all, when the novel charms of Hymen wear away, they cease to study what will please."

"Oh, likely enough, faix, Miss, fur what I know ov the matther; but if I was a nice, handsome young lady like you, Miss, I'd never go beyond Misther Stanton—that is, supposin' I was in the marryin' way, Miss—which they say you are not, Miss."

The interview and conversation might be prolonged considerably, but it will be enough to say that Tom Naddy, and Miss Bessy Lani-

gan parted upon the understanding, expressed or implied, that he was to use all his powers of intrigue and authority, to promote her to the station of Mistress Richard Stanton, provided she would, beforehand, prevail on Miss Helen Mac Neary to agree to marry Edmund Fennell privately—first of all, going at once to Gaby Mac Neary's house, and gaining an interview with Helen, in furtherance of the project.

Tom next kept his appointment with Edmund. His success with Miss Bessy Lanigan, astonished, though it delighted the young man. The next question was, what priest could be got to celebrate the private marriage?

"Father Connell surely," said Tom, "an' you must go at once to him yourself, Masther Neddy."

Edmund was disinclined to go. He almost feared to approach his old protector, and still, his most respected and beloved old friend, on such a mission, particularly, as he had, without

consulting him, come down from Dublin, to the interruption of his studies there; and remained so long in his native town, without calling upon his old priest.

But Tom Naddy insisted upon his going instantly. He would again meet Edmund, in a more convenient place, to learn the result. Tom now seemed quietly to claim from all parties concerned, full obedience to his commands, and by none was he eventually contradicted.

Edmund accordingly proceeded to speed his ungracious task. He returned to Tom Naddy, and imformed him that there was no hope. Father Connell had been more displeased with him than even he had anticipated. As Edmund foresaw, he had severely chided his return from Dublin without consulting him, and the want of confidence, in not immediately referring to himself for advice, especially offended the old priest. As to his officiating, in the private marriage, he altogether repudiated the idea.

"Well," said Tom Naddy, very thoughtfully, "I'll thry his poor rivirence fur you too, Masther Neddy, tho' faix I'm more afeared nor yourself was, a little while ago."

CHAPTER XIII.

"THIS is a world of sin, O Lord! And your patience is great with the sinners of it! Your mercy exceeds your justice, O Lord!"

Thus ejaculated Father Connell, as with his hands clasped within each other, and his eyes reverently, and most sorrowfully turned upwards he walked quickly about his little parlour.

Suddenly he stopped, and looked on our friend, Tom Naddy, whose effrontery, thorough as it was, could scarcely withstand the effects

produced upon his old master, by the atrocious lie, he had just uttered to him.

"And he told you this, Tom, of his own accord, and with his own lips?" questioned the priest.

"He did, your reverence." Tom swallowed half of this repetition, of the monstrous falsehood; "he was afeard of sayin' id to your own face, whin he came here, a little while ago; bud he tould id to me, that I might tell id to you—that is, I believe, an' I'm sure, that he wanted me to tell id to you, tho' he did'nt lay his commands on me, out an' out."

"Oh! oh! Lord have mercy on us, and guard us from evil!" moaned Father Connell, resuming his hasty walk up and down the apartment.

"I have hope, sir, that you won't be angry wid me for comin' to tell you?" questioned Tom, now shedding some real tears; for every moment he grew more and more afraid of the desperate course he had taken.

"No, Tom, no, I am not angry with you: on the contrary, I consider when you do not publish your neighbour's fault, for the purpose of exposing him to the world, but rather, with the intention of curbing him in his sinful career, you perform an act of praiseworthy christian charity."

The hardened diplomatist winced to the very quick under this most unmerited praise.

"I have been a father to that boy, Tom," and here, the old man's voice gave way; he clasped his hands more earnestly than before, and tears stole down his cheeks—"if he had been my own son, I could not have more truly loved him; and now, to repay me in this way—to repay me by outraging, in the most serious manner, the laws of that God whom I thought I had taught him to obey—oh, it is very sorrowful for my grey hairs; very, very sorrowful."

If ever liar was punished for his lie, almost in the very utterance of it, Tom Naddy was now that liar. All the acquired crookedness

of his mind, and all the pleasures resulting from an indulgence in it, yielded to a momentary exercise of his natural straightness of heart. The grief, which he had wantonly inflicted on the reverend and aged man before him, became inflicted on himself; and he mentally resolved, never to tell another lie during his life.

"And," continued Father Connell after another pause of abstraction—"not to talk of Edmund Fennell, I had a love for that unfortunate young lady, too. When Neddy was a poor, deserted, small boy, and when I went out to beg for him, she was a beautiful, and a delightful little creature; I give you my word, Tom Naddy, she bestowed on me, her Christmas box—half a golden guinea—her little hoard, that she had reserved for buying toys—to relieve him and his poor mother; yes, I loved Neddy Fennell, and I loved that beautiful little child; but both of them, Tom Naddy, my good boy, have taught me that the purest affec-

tions of this sinful, ugly world, are good for nothing—are good for nothing—nothing; the Lord be praised! And the Lord grant me strength to bear it, as I ought!" but, notwithstanding his endeavours at christian resignation, Father Connell's affliction of spirit encreased, and he wept plentifully.

As soon as he could speak, he resumed.

"But God help them; God help them, poor, sinful children; they have not, by their sinfulness, brought happiness to themselves, no more than to me; God help them!"

There was another pause, and he spoke again.

"Tom Naddy, my very good boy, it is not my opinion, that Neddy Fennell will oppose himself to his old priest, and—as I may call myself, without much boasting—to his old benefactor. No Tom, I do not think he will oppose himself to me, when I warn him, and caution him, and beg of him, with tears in my

eyes, to abandon his great sin—will he, Tom? Do you think he will?"

"In truth, sir, I'm very sure he won't."

"Well then, Tom, send him to me; perhaps he will be afraid or loath to come; but tell him, from me, that if he is only very sorry, I will not be hard or stern with him; tell him that the Lord of Heaven and earth is never harsh with repenting sinners; and that I, the Lord's poor priest, and lowliest servant, will not be more severe than his Master and mine. Send him to me, Tom, send him to me."

"I will, sir. But, sir—"

"Well Tom, my good boy?"

"I may be spakin' wrong, sir; but what is to become ov poor Miss Helen?"

The old man started.

"That is true, Tom, and very true. Edmund Fennell is bound before God and man, to repair the misfortune he has caused. And that dear tender hearted child, is she to be

abandoned to the world's scorn, and to the danger of continued offences, towards her Almighty maker? Sit you there, Tom, my good boy, till I come back to you, I will go up stairs to my own room for a while."

He left the little parlour, and Tom Naddy could hear him ascend the creaking old stairs, and then fall suddenly on his knees in his bed-room.

Naddy remained very uncomfortable during the considerable time he was absent. The solemnity of the priest's actions and manner, his deep sensibility, upon which the liar had not calculated, awed, and dismayed him. The fear of detection too, either by Edmund Fennell, or Father Connell, broke suddenly, for the first time upon him, and he began to be really terrified. And yet, did Tom endeavour to regain his equilibrium, by assuring himself that he was "doing every thing for the best," and that but for him, very dire mishaps must certainly occur.

Father Connell reappeared before him; there was now a fixed seriousness and a determination on the old gentleman's face.

"I have thought over this unfortunate business, Tom Naddy," he said, "as carefully and as diligently, as I was capable of, with, I hope, sincere prayer to assist me; and it appears to me that there is nothing to save these two unhappy young creatures, except a very extreme step. And there is great danger to all parties in such a measure. But worldly considerations are not to be kept in mind when our duty to God and our neighbour is to be performed. He was here himself, a while ago, to ask me to marry him privately to Helen Mac Neary. But he did not place before me the real grounds for his request, and thinking him only influenced by youthful inclination, and I feared, selfish inclination: and feeling that I had no authority, on such a plea, to outrage the feelings of the young girl's father, and his good friend, and mine, Tom—and at the same time

to offend the law of the land, I refused his application. But now the case is altered, terribly altered. Go to Edmund Fennell, and tell him, from me, to come here this evening, with his poor partner in error, and I will marry him to her."

"God bless your reverence, an' I'll tell him so; bud he's very much in awe ov you, an' no wonther—"

"If he had been in awe of me, Tom Naddy, he would not have risen up against me in the strength of this heavy sin; or, if he had loved me, he would not have rung my old heart by showing to me that all my care for him was sown in an ungrateful soil."

"Bud I know he'd be in awe ov you another way sir."

"How so, my good boy, Tom?"

"I'll go bail that when he comes he'd be denyin' everything to save himself from your anger, sir."

"Well; and it is likely enough that he may endeavour to impose on me. One sin brings on many. But I will not, for the present, tempt him to add falsehood to his other trangressions. I will not, for the present, even listen to any of his denials. I will stop his speech the moment he attempts them. But he shall not, therefore, escape me without making the first atonement he can make for his offence against God and man. Go now, Tom, and deliver my message to him."

"An' I will sir, an' wid all my heart. But sir, there is one other little thing you won't be angry wid me, fur sayin'. If ever he comes to know who it was that tould on him, sir, you know, I couldn't stand the counthry agen him, sir."

"Have no fears on that head, Tom. He shall never know from me the name of my informant, though I have hopes, under God's blessing, that at a future day he will become

his own accuser, and admit everything to me. Go now, Tom, at once, and tell him to be here this evening, and I will marry him."

Tom did go at once; and for the first time in his life he did not whistle as he went. Nor was his usual lazy, lounging gait that in which he now made way. In fact, he raced along the streets at his utmost speed, as if he would leave behind him something of which he was very much in dread, although they were only his own almost palpable misgivings, fears, and regrets, that pressed close to his heels, like a pack of little cur dogs, yelping and snarling, and occasionally biting him—at all events driving him furiously forward.

Edmund Fennell did not know him, as he approached their appointed place of meeting, so very much changed was his whole expression, indeed, as well as action. Coming near, however, Tom was soon recognizable.

"Well, Tom?" questioned Edmund, as much out of breath from impatience, as was his ambassador from speed.

"Well, Masther Neddy. Faix, an' it's well it is, sure enough; very well intirely fur *you;* bud fur other poor people that you get to put themselves into such scrapes, it's anything bud well, I'm thinkin'."

"Why, what's the matter? What's the answer? Does he consent?"

"Arrah, to be sure, he does, sir. Go to him this evenin', wid Miss Helen, an' he'll marry you to your heart's content; bud see here, Masther Neddy—frum this moment, I wash my hands ov all your plottin', schamin' ways; an' good-bye to you now; its too long I'm from home—an' I suppose there's somethin' else mighty pleasant waitin' there fur me, on your account; good-bye to you, Masther Neddy."

Edmund seized him by the collar, as he

was darting off, and shaking him heartily, said:—

"What *is* the matter with you, you incomprehensible fellow? Have you gone mad? Give me the answer, from Father Connell, clearly and coolly, or I'll—"

"An' hav'n't you id already, sir? What do you mane by me, at all? Let me be off home—th' ould priest bid me tell you, to come up wid her this evenin', and he'll settle your points fur you. What more can I say?—Thundher-an-turf, let me go! May I die in sin, if I ever say a word more, now or fur ever, amin, on the unloocky subject—Take your hand o' me, sir!"

"Away then!" and Edmund let him bound off, as a hound out of the leash.

"One of his periodical visitations, with very, very long intervals between," said Edmund to himself, "but I know I can depend upon his information; and so be thou, Miss Bessy Lani-

gan, as fortunate with Helen, as this mysterious rascal has been with Father Connell—nay, even with yourself—and I am the happiest of the happy, for ever!"

But Edmund was not, after all, about to take the true road to happiness.

CHAPTER XIV.

Since Tom Naddy's boyish days, when, it will be recollected, he got Ned Fennell into trouble, on the score of a certain letter, Father Connell had found him attentive, faithful, honest, and seemingly religious, and, therefore, placed full reliance in Tom. All doubt of his want of truth, left the good man's mind; and he had consequently received his late communications, with implicit faith. Indeed, such was Father Connell's virtuous and primitive character, that he could not even suspect dissimulation in any one whom he once trusted.

And these facts, joined with Tom's inimitable plausibility, of speech and manner, ensured success to him on the present occasion.

Shortly after night fall, on that day, three persons, silently ushered in, by Mrs. Molloy, entered the priest's parlour. They were Edmund Fennell, Helen Mac Neary, and Miss Bessy Lanigan.

Even under the circumstances, and with the accompaniments, which attend a marriage celebrated in the more usual way—amidst the blessings of parents—crowds of friends—publicity and banquetting—there is a something of doubt, of awe, of uncertainty for the future, which oppresses, even unto sorrow, a right-minded, and pure-hearted girl.

But much more than this Helen Mac Neary must have felt, in her present situation. She had stolen through the gloom of the evening, and in disguise, to vow her marriage vow, under the ministry of a clergyman, not of her own religious creed. Excepting her future

husband, she came supported but by one friend, and that one, an individual for whom she had but little respect. No father stood by her side, to give her away, and to bless her—she feared that she was about to cause him to curse her—she wore no bridal ornaments nor robe; and her single bridesmaid was in a similar predicament. All this, had a most depressing effect upon her spirits. But there was much more to weigh her down. She now felt that she had consented to this private marriage, hastily, and more in anger, against her father's peremptory measures, than—notwithstanding her love for Edmund Fennell—in a conviction of it's absolute necessity, or even of the force of the arguments which had been used, to persuade her to the step; and altogether, upon entering the priest's humble little house, she experienced a sense of unmaidenly impropriety that sunk her in her own estimation, and a terror of future consequences, which made her heart sick.

She crossed the threshold of the priest's parlour door. He sat alone, to a little table, stern, sorrowful, cheerless; the ray of his single economical candle, was cheerless too. His eye met Helen's; there was something in it, which made her tremble. Father Connell merely bowed his head, to his breast, as the party one and all saluted him. Edmund felt his bride hang heavier upon his arm.

And Edmund became almost as much agitated as was Helen. He knew his old benefactor well, and he felt certain that this cold silence, so different from Father Connell's usual cheeriness of manner, betokened anything but approval of the marriage which was about to ensue.

Slowly rising, after he had lowered his head, the priest motioned them to sit down. He then bent his knees on the chair from which he had arisen, covered his face with his hands, and apparently prayed. Perhaps he detected himself in a greater show of harshness, towards

the poor young couple, than he had promised them and that a portion of his prayers petitioned for grace to bear with them, more like a Christain. After some time, he stood up again, put on his stole, and turning over the leaves of his missal, he fixed his eyes on the little group, and said, in a sad and solemn tone,— "Come forward—I am ready."

Edmund and Miss Lanigan immediately rose, but Helen remained sitting. Edmund held out his arm to her. She made one or two unavailing efforts to take it.

"Why do you not come forward?" enquired the old priest.

Edmund answered, in a whisper, and with a choking throat, "Miss Mac Neary is not very well, sir; but she will recover soon—she has fainted sir."

Father Connell almost ran across the room; he saw the fair young girl, insensible and helpless; he saw her usually brilliant cheek, pale as paper; his sternness vanished in an instant, his features relaxed into a benign

expression of compassion and anxiety, and he took in his, one of her cold, deadened hands, and chafed it eagerly.

"God bless you, God bless you, my poor child," he murmured in tones of shivering tenderness.

Helen Mac Neary stirred, sighed, looked up into his face, let fall her forehead on his hand, and burst into agonies of tears.

"Don't, don't cry, my poor child; God is good, and he will give you grace, and strength, and repentance; put your trust in the Lord, my dear child, and he will support you.—Peggy, Peggy," he cried out, in his loudest voice.

Peggy, who was quite within hail, was very soon at her master's elbow.

"Peggy, this poor, dear little child, this good, charitable little girl, is very ill and weakly—Peggy, you know what would be good for her, better than I do — Peggy," he added in a whisper, "don't you think a glass of wine would do her good? I think it would, Peggy."

"Why thin, what else in the world wide, would do her half so much good?" questioned Peggy, dogmatically.

"I am much recovered now, sir," said Helen Mac Neary, once more looking up, with streaming eyes, into his face.

"Oh, you will be better, my dear, you will be better. Peggy go into the closet,"—he pointed to one in which the wine for the altar was kept—"I know there is some wine on the shelf: bring it here quickly."

Peggy soon obeyed his commands; her coarse exterior covered a tender heart—provided always that Peggy was allowed her own method of indulging its impulses. Under her soothing attentions, Helen gradually grew stronger, and more collected.

Father Connell regained the further side of the room. Under the influence of this accidental appeal to his compassion, scarce a trait of his severity of manner remained. And as soon as Helen was quite able to engage in the

ceremony, she and Edmund Fennell were, by his ministry, united as husband and wife, "to have and to hold," until death. Peggy was allowed to be a witness on the occasion; and it was with the heartiest good will, that she saw "her own dear boy," married to so lovely a partner for life.

Upon Peggy's hasty entrance into the parlour, she had left the door open; from the position, in which Edmund and Helen stood up to the ceremony, they could see out through it, into the almost perfectly dark hall. The priest had scarcely ended his official duties, when Helen fancied she descried, leaning against the wall of the hall, a female figure. Starting back, and glancing again, she became sure that a living thing did flit away, through the darkness, out of view. The next moment, from some place in the house, more distant than the hall, the low, and seemingly smothered wailing of a young, and very musical voice, was heard, accompanied by a slight

noise, as if of gentle clapping of hands. Father Connell looked at Peggy, somewhat reprehensively, and Peggy looked at him deprecatingly; and then, she left the room, now carefully closing the door after her. The next moment, the low wailing, with its accompaniment, were heard no longer. Helen wondered, and even vaguely feared something, but made no enquiries of any one.

This little incident scarce occupied as much time, as could cause any interruption to the business going on. Father Connell now turned to Edmund.

"Edmund Fennell," he said, "these ladies, your wife, and her friend, will pardon us, if we leave them together, for a moment. Come you with me. I wish to hold some conversation with you. Follow me."

Edmund accordingly walked after the old clergyman, up to his bedroom;—the little parlour was the only reception room in the house.

"Sit down there, Neddy Fennell;" Father Connell pointed to a chair, while he fastened the door. He then paced for a considerable time, up and down, and at length spoke again.

"Neddy Fennell, I have brought you here, to hold some very serious discourse with you. I have brought you here, to try if the words of your old friend, and your old priest, will have any weight with you. Will you be attentive to me, Neddy Fennell?"

"I will, sir—thoroughly and reverently attentive."

"Well. And you must make me a promise, beforehand, Neddy Fennell. You must promise me that you will not even attempt to reply to anything I shall say, unless I require an answer to a question."

"Anything that you point out, sir, I will obey."

"That is not a distinct answer to my distinct proposition. You are to promise, that you will not reply to my words—that you

are to remain perfectly silent—unless I ask you a question—do you promise that?"

"I do, sir."

"Neddy Fennell, I have been a friend to you, because I loved you. From your infancy I loved you; from the very first day that you came to give your childish assistance, at the altar of God, I loved you. A change came over your life, even while you were yet a child, and you wanted a hand to be held out to you, and my hand was so held out to you;—and I do not now mention these things, through vain glory—God forbid I did—but from the necessity of the case before us.

"And I tried to do you more good, much more good than this. By precepts, and I humbly hope by example, I tried to fill your heart with the fear and the love of God. But I did not expect that you were to pay me back my love of you, and my care for you with money, or with worldly goods; I will tell you, however, what I did expect. I did expect and believe

that you would have shown your sense of thankfulness to me, by honouring and serving the Lord. Neddy Fennell you have disappointed me; sorely disappointed me, and sorely, sorely afflicted me."

"Gracious Heavens, sir!—I—"

"Remember your promise, and listen to me, Neddy Fennell," Father Connell raised his finger, and frowned on the young man. "Neddy Fennell, you have sinned a great sin."

"Father Connell! hear me, sir!"

"Silence, you Edmund Fennell! and again remember your promise—remember it literally. I will *not* hear you at present, at a future time I will. It is now your duty to attend to my counsel, and to let me gain a future hope for you, by witnessing your docility, and your humility under your priest's reproof.

"The only recompense, Neddy Fennell, I will ever ask, or receive from you, for my love to you your whole life long, is your solemn

resolution, to avoid, from this day forward, future sin; and to keep that resolution, and to be sorry, and to repent for the past—be silent I command you once more, or I must think that you are impatient of your old priest's rebuke, and that would be a bad sign indeed.

"You are now, though a very young man, a married man. No matter what may have occurred up to this moment, you are bound to love and cherish your wife; to love her above all, except your God; to be faithful and true to her; to cherish her beyond yourself, or the whole world besides;—you solemnly engage to do this, with God's assistance?"

"With God's assistance, sir, I most solemnly engage to do this."

"I hope you will; nay, I almost—I quite believe you will; and indeed, indeed, I will pray that you may obtain the grace to do so. Neddy Fennell, up to this very moment, I love you; and I have just proved it to you.

Answer me this question, and answer it truly. When you came here this evening, had you any knowledge of the danger, that I should run, in marrying you, to that poor child? Answer me this truly, as if you were replying at the judgment-seat."

"I solemnly protest, sir, as if I were answering at the judgment-seat, that I did not know, you must incur any danger, by uniting us in marriage."

"And Neddy, notwithstanding all that has passed, I believe what you now say. I do not think you would willingly subject your old friend, and your priest to the peril, in which, I have voluntarily placed myself. For Neddy, I have, this night, subjected myself to a felon's punishment, for your sake, and, as I said before, out of my love for you. To save you, from continued sin, I have married you to a Protestant; and if, for doing this, I be prosecuted and convicted, the law of the land will

send me, a banished felon, from this country. It's punishment, for my act, is, transportation beyond the seas, for life."

"Merciful powers!" cried Edmund, starting up, "why was I ignorant of this law? Oh, my dear, my beloved, and venerated father, I knew not what I was doing!"

"I have told you, Neddy Fennell, that I believed your former assertion, on the point. And yet, with my eyes open, I did this for you, and you cannot therefore doubt, that I love you still. Now, attend to me, again.

"I have loved you ever since you were a little child—I have proved that I love you yet. You have been criminal—repent, amend, atone. Above all things mark my words; take your wife to your bosom; cast no word of reproach or slight upon her; be unto her true, loving, tender, and cherishing: if you wish to show me that you are grateful, this is the gratitude I look for. Lead a good life, and let your wife find in you a Christian husband. As

you hope for a future blessing, and if you value my death-bed prayers, do all this, my son."

Ned Fennell threw himself on his knees before the old man, clasping both his hands together.

"Just as you now are," said Father Connell, holding his right arm on high, "just as you now are, renew the promise before Heaven and me."

"Before Heaven, and before you, sir, I renew the promise to do all this."

"Well. Rise now." The priest offered him his hand, and as he obeyed, gave it one of the old squeezes, to which it was so well accustomed. Still, however, he was grave and reserved, though not severely so.

"And Neddy Fennell, we will now go down stairs, and you will take your wife to you and comfort her, and love her. You must call to see me to-morrow, that we may confer on your future plans; and how far this circumstance may have to do with them. I fear that it will

have a great deal to do with them. But we will hope for the best. Sufficient for the day, is the evil thereof."

He led Edmund by the hand to his bride. The young couple, with their friend, arose to depart. He accompanied them to the outer door of his little premises, and there, before bidding them good night, gave them anew his hearty and affectionate benediction.

END OF VOL. II.

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